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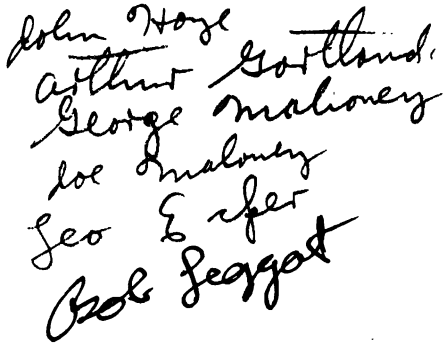
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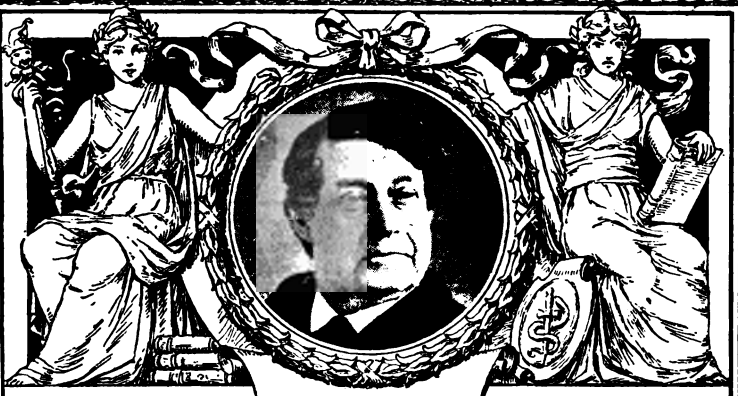

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MARY STUART

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

FROM THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER

Edited, by permission, from the prompt-book of Mme. Helena Modjeska

By M. A.

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MARY STUART.

CHARACTERS.

	Boston Theatre, Nov. 10, 1876.	Tremont Theatre Feb. 28, 1898.
Elizabeth, *Queen of England*	Mrs. Thos. Barry	Miss Anna Procter
Mary Stuart, *Queen of Scots, a prisoner in England*	Mme. Janauschek	Mme. Modjeska
Hannah Kennedy, *her nurse*	Mrs. C. L. Allen	Mrs. H. E. Sargent
Margaret Curl, *her attendant*	Miss Lizzie Hunt	Miss Anna Daly
Robert Dudley, *Earl of Leicester*	E. J. Buckley	E. J. Lonergan
George Talbot, *Earl of Shrewsbury*	T. M. Hunter	Geo. S. Spencer
William Cecil, *Lord Burleigh, Lord High Treasurer*	M. M. Price	John Malone
Sir William Davison *Secretary of State*	George Boles	
Sir Amias Paulet, *keeper of Mary*	C. L. Allen	Wadsworth Harris
Sir Edward Mortimer, *his nephew*	L. R. Shewell	Joseph Haworth
Count L'Aubespine, *the French Ambassador*	H. A. Cripps	
Count Bellievre, *Envoy Extraordinary from France*	E. W. Presbrey	
Sir Drue Drury, *another keeper of Mary*	J. Taylor	
Sir Andrew Melvil, *her house steward*	H. R. Davies	Jas. M. Ward
Burgoyne, *her physician*		W. Wm. Wilson
The Earl of Kent		Geo. Sylvester
Sheriff of the County.		
Officer of the Guard		David Ward

French and English Lords, Soldiers, Servants of State belonging to Elizabeth, and Servants and female attendants of the Queen of Scots.

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COSTUMES.

Descriptions furnished by the HAYDEN COSTUME CO., *243 Tremont St., Boston, Mass., to whom all interested persons are referred for further details.*

QUEEN ELIZABETH. *Act 1.* — Grey velvet gown, open front, over underskirt of same color; waist high cut with puff sleeves to elbow and tight-fitting to wrist; ruff for neck; head-dress of pearls. *Act 2.* — Black and gold brocade open front gown, over white brocade underskirt; waist cut to a point; ruff for neck. Red velvet robe, very long, lined with ermine; brilliant coronet with small crown in centre. *Act 3.* — Dark green velvet gown, full sleeves slashed with light green satin; underskirt of yellow brocade, and head-dress of green velvet trimmed with pearls. *Act 4.* — Yellow and white brocade gown, with slashed sleeves, and hanging sleeves of yellow; white satin front jewelled with stones and pearls; high ruching collar and coronet.

MARY STUART. *Act 1.* — Red velvet gown, with full sleeves slashed with white satin; yellow brocade front. Jewelled necklace, tiara of brilliants, and ruff for neck. *Act 3.*—Wine colored velvet gown, high neck, with full sleeves slashed with old gold satin; underskirt of old gold; and close fitting head-dress of wine colored velvet, trimmed with pearls. *Act 5.*—Royal blue velvet gown over yellow satin and embroidered front; sleeves slashed with yellow satin. Blue velvet robe with train trimmed with ermine; jewelled belt and cestus; small crown.

HANNAH KENNEDY. *Act 1.*— Brown cashmere dress, full sleeves to elbow and tight fitting to wrist; linen collar and cuffs with lace edge. *Act 3.* — Wine colored cloth dress, pointed waist; skirt draped over black underskirt; sleeves puffed with white at shoulder; close fitting black velvet cap. *Act 5.*—Black cashmere dress, very full skirt; puffed sleeves and high neck; ruching collar, and linen cuffs with lace edge.

MARGARET CURL. *Act 5.*—Black velvet gown, low neck and pointed waist, with full sleeves slashed with purple satin; underskirt of purple satin; ruff for neck; pearl ornaments.

ROBERT DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER. *Act 2.* — Dark blue velvet doublet, embroidered with gold; light blue satin sleeves, puffed at shoulders; short puffed trunks of dark blue velvet, with light blue satin puffs; short shoulder cloak; conical shape hat and plume; tights, shoes and rosettes, ruff for neck. *Act 3.*—Leather jerkin, with green velvet puffed sleeves; full trunks, tights, high russet boots, shoulder cloak, hat and plume, sword and belt. *Act 4.* — Wine colored velvet doublet trimmed with gilt lace, and old gold satin puffs in sleeves; cloak, and short puffed trunks of same; tights, shoes and rosettes; jewelled collar. *Act 5.* — Black velvet doublet trimmed with jet, and black satin puffs. Cloak and short puffed trunks of same; tights, shoes and rosettes.

GEORGE TALBOT, EARL OF SHREWSBURY. *Act 2.* —Yellow brocade doublet with white satin puffs, and trimmed with gold. Cloak, and short puffed trunks of same. Tights, shoes, rosettes and ruff. *Act 3.*—Leather jerkin, with wine colored satin puffs; short puffed

trunks of same. Cashmere cloak; tights, high turret top boots, flat hat and plume. *Act 4.* — Purple velvet doublet with lavender puffings, trimmed with silver; short puffed trunks, and cloak; ruff, tights, shoes and rosettes. Jewelled collar and order.

WILLIAM CECIL, LORD BURLEIGH. *Acts 1 and 4.* — Black velvet doublet slashed with purple; short puffed trunks of same. Armhole cloak, tights, shoes and rosettes. Chain with order for neck. *Act 2.*—Dark green velvet doublet with light green satin puffs and gold trimmings; tights, shoes, rosettes and ruffs. *Act 5.* — Black velvet shirt or tunic to knee; puffed sleeves; belt and pocket; black tights, shoes and rosettes.

SIR WILLIAM DAVISON. *Act 4.*—Wine colored velvet shirt to ankle, with puffed sleeves; belt and pocket. Hose, shoes, rosettes. Chain of office. Armhole cloak of black velvet with gilt trimming and long hanging sleeves.

COUNT L'AUBESPINE. *Act 2.* —White and gold brocade tunic and trunks, with yellow puffs; black velvet shoulder cloak, with embroidered order on left side. Jewelled collar, tights, shoes and rosettes. Rapier and sword belt.

SIR AMIAS PAULET. *Act 1.*—Dark velvet shirt of wine color to knee; armhole cloak of same, with gilt trimming; belt and pocket; tights, shoes, rosettes. *Act 2.*— Brown brocade doublet and trunks, with puffs of lighter brown satin; cloak, tights, shoes, rosettes and ruff. *Act 3.*—Leather jerkin with old gold puffs in sleeves; short trunks, cloak, tights, boots, hat and plume. *Act 5.*—Long black velvet armhole cloak with hanging sleeves, worn over first act costume.

SIR EDWIN MORTIMER. *Act 1.* —Wine colored velvet doublet, with pink satin puffs in sleeves, trimmed with gold. Short puffed trunks of same. Cloak, tights, shoes, rosettes and ruff. *Act 2.*—Blue velvet brocade doublet, with yellow puffs on sleeves; short puffed trunks of same. Cloak, tights, shoes, rosettes, ruff. *Act 4.*—Red velvet brocade doublet, puffed sleeves of lavender satin; short trunks of same. Cloak, tights, shoes and rosettes.

COUNT BELLIEVRE. *Act 2.* — Black and gold brocade tunic to knee; belt and pocket; tights; armhole cloak, hanging sleeves; shoes and rosettes.

SIR DRUE DRURY. *Act 1.* — Brown velvet shirt to knee; belt and pocket; brown velvet armhole cloak; tights, shoes and rosettes. *Act 5.*—Long black velvet armhole cloak with hanging sleeves, over costume of act one.

SIR ANDREW MELVIL. — Long black cloth shirt to ankle; belt and pocket; black overgown with full sleeves; hose, shoes and rosettes.

BURGOYNE. — Brown velvet tunic and trunks; black cloth overgown with full sleeves; tights, shoes and rosettes.

EARL OF KENT.—Grey velvet doublet with wine satin puffs in sleeves; short full trunks of same. Cloak, ruff, tights, shoes and rosettes.

SHERIFF.—Long wine colored shirt to ankles, trimmed with green border and steel trimmings; green overgown with hanging sleeves; hose, shoes, rosettes, staff of office.

OFFICER OF GUARD. — Beefeater tunic of blue cloth, with red puffings in sleeves and edged with yellow; short puffed trunks, red tights, russet shoes, flat hat, with soft crown; ruff for neck; and halberd.

INTRODUCTION.

THE character and misfortunes of Mary Stuart have always made a strong appeal to dramatic authors, to whose instincts the mystery of her heart, one of the most fascinating problems of history, offers most tempting material. Baker's "Biographica Dramatica" supplies the following by no means exhaustive list of early plays upon this subject: "Mary, Queen of Scotland," published in 1703, but not acted, so far as recorded; "Mary, Queen of Scots," in five acts, by the Hon. John St. John, produced at Drury Lane, March 20, 1789, with the celebrated Mrs. Siddons in the title part; "Mary Stewart, Queen of Scots," published in 1801, but never acted; "Mary, Queen of Scots: or the Escape from Loch Leven," an historical drama in two acts, by William Murray, first produced in Edinburgh on October 3, 1825, with Mrs. H. Siddons as Mary, and for the first time in America at the Chatham Theatre, New York, under the management of George L. Fox, January 31, 1858; "Mary, Queen of Scots," an unfinished play, begun by Philip, Duke of Wharton; "Mary, Queen of Scots," by Dr. Francklin; "Mary, Queen of Scots," a dramatic poem by Mrs. M. Deverell; and "Mary Stuart," a dramatic poem by James Graham. A tragedy on this subject by one Haynes was produced at the Park Theatre, New York, March 23, 1840, by the Vandenhoffs and Miss Cushman, but was not afterwards heard of. Testimony to the attractiveness of this subject may thus be seen to be strong in the number of its witnesses, to the numerous group of which Tennyson, with his "Queen Mary," and Swinburne, with his "Mary Stuart," at the head of a large modern following, give dignity and distinction. Among recent additions to the list it may be noted that Mr. Orville W. Owen's cryptographic ingenuity has succeeded in discovering a play of "Mary Stuart" lurking in cipher in the works of Francis Bacon. The only dramatic presentation of the character that has found solid and permanent favor in the English theatre, however, is that of Schiller, of which the present is the first acting version to be published in English.

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller's "Maria Stuart," was first produced at Weimar, June 14, 1800, and was published by Cotta in June of the following year. Frau Vohs was the original Mary, Caroline Jagermann the Elizabeth, and Herr Cordemann the Leicester. Its success was immediate and triumphant, and its popularity has remained unabated to this day as an item of the German tragic theatrical repertory. Schiller's play was translated into French by Pierre Antoine Lebrun (1785–1873), whose version was published in 1820, and produced on March 6 of that year at the Premier Theatre Francais, Paris, with Mlle. Duchesnois as Marie, M. Talma as Leicester, Mme. Paradol as Elizabeth and M. Michelot as Mortimer. Other translation were made, notably that of Louis Sebastien Mercier (1740–1814), which was never published, but Lebrun's alone found place in the repertory of the French theatre. Mlle. Duchesnois' remarkable performance of the title part has never been surpassed by later rivals, according to French historians of the theatre. The great Rachel, who essayed the character for the first time on December 22, 1840, did not succeed in diminishing her predecessor's glory nor of at all attaining the eminence of her "matchless third act," as Legouvé characterizes it. An Italian version, by Andrea Maffei, entitled "Maria Stuarda," appeared in 1852, and is the one in which Ristori first appeared in this country.

Schiller's "Mary Stuart" was first produced in England in the translation of J. C. Mellish, at Covent Garden, December 14, 1819, having been published in 1801. Miss Macauley was the Mary and Charles Kemble the Mortimer, Contemporary criticism curiously ignored the eminent dramatic and imaginative values of the play, which, indeed, may have been partly obscured by Mellish, and expressed itself chiefly in censure of its historical inaccuracy and falsity of local color, the scene between the rival queens in Fotheringay Park having been found particularly unsatisfactory in this respect. The absence of national character and sentiment from Schiller's scenes seems to have blinded his first English audiences to other and more important characteristics. This version, like the present, was enormously condensed from the prodigious length of the original. The first American production of this play was in French and took place in what was then called the Metropolitan Theatre (formerly Tripler Hall, and later, under Boucicault's management, The Winter Garden Theatre), on September 7, 1855. The version employed was Lebrun's translation, and the protagonist the great Rachel. Eleven years later, in September, 1866, Ristori made her first appearance in the United States in this character at The Theatre Francais, in New York, supported

by an Italian company, the performance being given in that language.

The first performance of "Mary Stuart" in this country in English is said by Col. T. Allston Brown, whose dicta as to theatrical matters are bound to command respect, to have been given at the Walnut Street Theatre, in Philadelphia, during the season of 1865-66, by Jean Davenport Lander; but it has been found impossible to verify this statement.

It has been found equally impossible to identify the "Mary Stuart" produced at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, on December 13, 1829, by Mrs. J. R. Duff, at a single performance for this lady's benefit, as a translation of Schiller's play, though the cast of characters, so far as it can be traced, makes this seem to be the fact. Mrs. Duff was the Mary Stuart of this performance, Mrs. G. Barrett the Elizabeth, Mr. Scott the Leicester, and Mr. W. H. Smith the Mortimer. This piece, whatever its source, does not seem to have been repeated by Mrs. Duff or any other, in Boston or elsewhere; but if, as seems probable, it was a translation of Schiller's play, its unique production slenderly carries off the honors of priority. But whether or not Mrs. Lander played the part in 1865 in Philadelphia in some experimental version, and whatever the origin of Mrs. Duff's isolated performance, Mrs. Lander may fairly be credited with having created the part of Mary Stuart in the United States, since her first appearance in a version of the play prepared expressly for her use by herself and Mr. George Becks can be established definitely, and since her presentation of the character, thus initiated, had a national and not merely a local recognition and repute.

The play-bill, of which the following is a copy, is believed to be that of the first notable performance in the United States of Schiller's "Mary Stuart" in English, subject to the doubts hinted at above. The translation of Frances Anne Kemble, to which the bill refers, is the one made by that lady under the inspiration of Rachel's performance, published in 1863, and employed by her in her readings in the United States up to her final retirement in 1869. Mrs. Kemble's readings of this, as of the Shakesperean plays, were in high favor with the American public for many years, but failed to win the approval of Miss Kate Field, who expressed herself as having been "bored to death" by them, and opined that she "had no idea of Mary Stuart's character." This may be regarded variously as a criticism of Mrs. Kemble as a reader or Miss Field as a critic. The Miss Goldthwaite, who humbly brings up the rear of this cast in the probably speechless part of Gertrude, is the lady who was later a prominent member of the Boston Theatre Company.

BOSTON THEATRE.

J. B. BOOTH . . . . . LESSEE AND MANAGER

BENEFIT OF

MRS. LANDER

(*Formerly Miss Jean M. Davenport*)

THIS FRIDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 27, 1867,

On which occasion she will appear for the first time as

MARY STUART

in an adaptation of

MRS. FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE'S

Translation, being the first time that the piece has ever been produced in English in Boston.

Supported by the

LANDER HISTRIONIC COMPANY

MRS. LANDER	as	MARY STUART
MR. J. H. TAYLOR	as	LEICESTER
LORD BURLEIGH		MR. A. W. FENNO
SIR AMIAS PAULET		W. M. LEMAN
MORTIMER		W. J. COGGSWELL
SIR JAMES MELVILLE		GEORGE BECKS
SEYMOUR		N. CLARKE
DRURY		JAMES TAYLOR
QUEEN ELIZABETH		MINNIE MONK
KENEDY		MISS JENNIE GOURLEY
MARGARET KURL		MRS. J. H. BROWNE
ALICE		MISS JOHNSON
ROSAMOND		MISS LONG
GERTRUDE		MISS GOLDTHWAITE

Mr. George Becks, the *Melville* of this cast, writes as follows regarding this performance: — "I had helped Madame to prepare this version whilst on a visit to her home in Lynn during the summer of 1867. We had carefully rehearsed it for some weeks, and I shall never forget the smoothness and beauty of the play on that evening. A tremendous house, and the piece a success at once. Mrs. Lander played it very often and with great favor during the rest of her playing years. It was a highly finished performance with her. Mrs. Lander calls it an adaptation from Frances Anne Kemble's, but the fact is that it is a blending of that and the translation in the Bohn edition, with bits taken from the French of Lebrun. The work was that of Mrs. Lander and myself." This testimony of one who had an actual hand in the work seems to be conclusive.

Mme. Janauschek, who was later widely and favorably known in connection with this character, first played the part in the United States in German at the Academy of Music, New York, October 17, 1867. Her performance was followed by the notable one of Marie Seebach, who first appeared in this role at the Academy of Music, New York, April 28, 1871. Janauschek's first appearance in the part in English occurred four years later, in the season of 1871-72. Mrs. D. P. Bowers, who was also prominently identified with the part in this country, made her first appearance considerably later.

The present version is substantially that employed in the performances of Mme. Modjeska, though, following the editorial plan of this series, modifications and changes have been made in both text and business whenever sufficient agreement of usage by other players seemed to justify them, the aim, as usual, being to supply a competent piece for the use of stock companies. The Wingfield version, as the strict text of the Modjeska book is called, was prepared by the Hon. Lewis Wingfield for her London production of the piece, and was played by her for the first time at the Court Theatre in that city, October 9, 1880. It attributes a penitence to Leicester which is quite outside Schiller's conception of the Earl, but it shared with Mme. Modjeska's performance the approval of London audiences and critics, and has been selected as, on the whole, the best all round acting version of the play. It was produced by Mme. Modjeska for the first time in the United States on January 5, 1886. Mme. Modjeska was uniformly pleasing and effective in this part, though her pathos was not always moving nor her passion compelling. Her performance was at all points supplementary to the heroic impersonation of the great Ristori, whose lofty force and authoritative passion had an undeniable hardness of effect, the fascinations

of the mere woman, and many of the lighter phases of the character, so ably presented by Mme. Modjeska, lying quite outside her sphere. Modjeska's physical gifts to this part were generous and well appreciated — a royal elegance of bearing, an unvarying grace and picturesqueness of effect, and a singularly musical voice.

This edition of "Mary Stuart" has the usual aim of this series, and is offered for reading or acting with confidence that the cuts and arrangement of its text are the ones best calculated to serve the ends of the theatre. Important business is, in all cases, fully indicated; minute details, depending on the taste of the players or the conditions of the performance, are, as usual, left to the stage management of the particular production.

F. E. CHASE.

December 29th, 1903.

MARY STUART.

ACT I.

Scene. — *A room in the Castle of Fotheringay. The walls are of stone. The few articles of furniture, a chair* R., *a table and chair* L., *and a cabinet, are old and massive. The general air of the room is grim and prison-like. A door at* L. *leads to* QUEEN MARY'S *private rooms; one at* R. 2 E. *and another up stage, at* R. 4 E., *to other parts of the castle. The cabinet is up stage against the wall at back,* C. *Before it stand* PAULET, R., *and* DRURY, L. *The latter has just burst open the door of the cabinet with an iron crowbar on which he leans.* PAULET *is about to examine contents.*

LIGHTS full up at rise.

READY papers and jewels in cabinet and documents at R. 2 E. for Burleigh.

Enter *hurriedly at* L., HANNAH KENNEDY, *who crosses hastily to* PAULET.

KEN. (C.). How now, sir? What fresh outrage have we here?
Intruder, back! here lie my lady's secrets.
(*Advancing towards the cabinet.*)
PAUL. (R.). Exactly what I seek. (*Drawing forth papers.*)
KEN. Mere trifling papers;
The amusements only of an idle pen,
To cheat the dreary tedium of a dungeon.
PAUL. (*touches a secret spring and draws out jewels from a private drawer*). Ha! what have we here?

A royal diadem enriched with stones,
And studded with the fleur-de-lis of France!
(*He hands it to* DRURY.)
Here, take it, Drury, lay it with the rest.

Exit DRURY, R. 2 E.

KEN. (*down* R.). Oh, insolent
And tyrant power, to which we must submit!
PAUL. She can work ill as long as she hath treasures;
For all things turn to weapons in her hands.
KEN. Is this a fate for her, the gentle born,
Who, in her very cradle, was a Queen;
Who, rear'd in Catherine's luxurious court,
Enjoyed the fulness of each earthly pleasure?
Was't not enough to rob her of her power,
Must ye then envy her its paltry tinsel?
PAUL. Accursed office, that's intrusted to me,
To guard this cunning mother of all ill!
KEN. Hush! Here comes the Queen. (*Crosses to* C.)
PAUL. (*down* R.). Christ's image in her hand,
Pride, and all worldly lusts, within her heart.

Enter *at* L., MARY, *veiled, a crucifix in her hand.*

KEN. (*hastening towards her*). O gracious Queen, they tread us under foot;
Each coming day heaps fresh indignities,
New sufferings on thy royal head.
MARY (C.). Be calm —
Say, what has happened?
KEN. See! thy cabinet
Is forc'd — thy papers — and thy only treasure,
The last poor remnant of thy bridal ornaments
From France is in his hands — nought now remains
Of royal state — thou art indeed bereft!
MARY. Compose yourself, my Hannah!
(*Looks calmly at* PAULET.)
I have learnt
To use myself to many a change in England;
I can support this, too.
(HANNAH *turns sadly up stage to disarranged cabinet and busies herself with it.*)

Sir, you have ta'en
By force what I this very day designed
To have deliver'd to you. There's a letter
Amongst these papers for my royal sister
Of England. Pledge me, sir, your word of honor,
To give it to her majesty's own hands,
And not to the deceitful care of Burleigh.

PAUL. I shall consider what is best to do.

MARY. Sir, you shall know its import. In this letter
I beg a favor of the Queen of England.
That she herself will give me audience — she
Whom I have never seen. I have been summon'd
Before a court of men whom I can ne'er
Acknowledge as my peers — of men to whom
My heart denies its confidence.

PAUL. Too oft, my Lady,
Have you entrusted both your fate and honor
To men less worthy your esteem than these.

MARY. The Queen
Is of my family, my rank, my sex;
To her alone — a sister, queen, and woman —
Can I unfold my heart.
I, in the letter, beg another favor,
And surely nought but inhumanity
Can here reject my prayer. These many years
Have I, in prison, miss'd the church's comfort,
The blessing of the sacraments.

PAUL. Whene'er you wish, the Dean shall wait upon you—

MARY (*interrupting him sharply*). Talk to me not of Deans.
I ask the aid
Of one of my own church — a Catholic priest.

PAUL. That is against the publish'd laws of England.

MARY. The laws of England are no rules for me.
I am not England's subject.
I also wish a public notary,
And secretaries, to prepare my will —

PAUL. This liberty
May be allowed to you, for England's Queen
Will not enrich herself by plundering you.

MARY. I have been parted from my faithful women,
And from my servants; tell me, where are they?

What is their fate? I can indeed dispense
At present with their service, but my heart
Will feel rejoiced to know these faithful ones
Are not exposed to suff'ring and to want!

PAUL. Your servants have been cared for.

(PAULET *turns away towards door at* R. 2 E.)

MARY. And will you leave my presence thus again,
And not relieve my fearful, anxious heart
From the fell torments of uncertainty?

(PAULET *pauses at door.*)

A month of dread suspense is pass'd already,
Since when the forty high commissioners
Surprised me in this castle, and erected,
With most unseemly haste, their dread tribunal.
They forced me, stunn'd, amaz'd, and unprepar'd,
Without an advocate, from memory,
Before their unexampled court, to answer
Their weighty charges, artfully arranged;
And since that day all mouths are clos'd to me.
O! break this silence — let me know the worst —
What I have still to fear, and what to hope.

PAUL. (*solemnly raising one hand above his head*). Close your accounts with heaven.

MARY. From heaven I hope
For mercy, sir — and from my earthly judges
I hope, and still expect, the strictest justice.

PAUL. Justice, depend upon it, will be done you.

MARY. Is my trial ended, sir?

PAUL. I cannot tell.

MARY. Am I condemn'd?

PAUL. I cannot answer, lady.

MARY. Despatch is here the fashion. Is it meant
The murderer shall surprise me, like the judges?

PAUL. (*returning to* R. C.). Still entertain that thought, and he will find you
Better prepared to meet your fate than they did.

MARY (*after a pause*). Sir, nothing can surprise me which a court,
Inspired by Burleigh's hate and Hatton's zeal,
Howe'er unjust, may venture to pronounce.

But I have yet to learn how far the Queen
Will dare in execution of the sentence.

MORTIMER **enters** *brusquely at* R. 2 E., *and without paying attention to the* QUEEN, *addresses* PAULET.

MORT. Uncle, you're sought for.
(*He* **exits** *in the same manner,* R. 2 E. *The* QUEEN *remarks his rudeness, and turns towards* PAULET, *who is about to follow him.* HANNAH *comes down to her.*)

MARY. Sir, one favor more —
(PAULET *turns back again.*)
If *you* have aught to say to me — from *you*
I can bear much — I rev'rence your grey hairs —
But cannot bear that young man's insolence.
Spare me in future his unmanner'd rudeness.

PAUL. I prize him most for that which makes you hate him.
He is not, truly, one of those poor fools
Who melt before a woman's treacherous tears.
He has seen much — has been to Rheims and Paris,
And brings us back his true old English heart.
Lady, your cunning arts are lost on him.
(**Exit** R. 2 E. MARY *sighs, turns to table at* L. *and sits sadly down at* R. *of it, leaning her head on her hand.*)

KEN. And dares the ruffian venture to your face
Such language! O, 'tis hard — 'tis past endurance.
(*Approaching her at* L. *of table.*)
So downcast, so depressed, my dearest lady!
You, who before so gay, so full of hope,
Were used to comfort me in my distress?
More gracious were the task to check your mirth
Than chide your heavy sadness.

MARY (*raising her hand in warning*). I hear a step.

KEN. It is the nephew! In! (MARY *rises.*)

Enter MORTIMER, R. 2 E., *approaching cautiously.*

MORT. (*to* KENNEDY, R.). Step to the door, and keep a careful watch;
I have important business with the Queen.

MARY (*with dignity*). I charge thee, Hannah, go not hence — remain.

MORT. Fear not, my gracious lady — learn to know me.
(*He approaches her and gives her a card.*)

MARY (*examines it and starts back astonished*). Heav'ns! What is this?

MORT. (*to* KENNEDY). Retire, good Kennedy; See that my uncle comes not unawares.

MARY (*to* KENNEDY, *who hesitates, and looks at the* QUEEN *inquiringly*). Go in; do as he bids you.
(KENNEDY *retires with signs of wonder to door at* R. 2 E., *and* **exits.**)

MARY. From my uncle
In France — the worthy Card'nal of Lorrain? (*She reads.*)
" Confide in Mortimer, who brings you this;
You have no truer, firmer friend in England."
(*Looking at him with astonishment.*)
Can I believe it? Do I find a friend
So near, and find that friend in you,
The nephew of my gaoler, whom I thought
My most invet'rate enemy?

MORT. (*kneeling* R. C.). Oh! pardon,
My gracious Liege, for the detested mask
Which it has cost me pain enough to wear;
Yet through such means alone have I the pow'r
To see you and to bring you help and rescue.

MARY. Arise, sir; you astonish me. I cannot
So suddenly emerge from the abyss
Of wretchedness to hope.

MORT. (*rising*). Our time is brief; each moment I expect
My uncle, whom a hated man attends.
Hear, then, before his terrible commission
Surprises you, how Heav'n prepares your rescue.
Allow me of myself to speak.

MARY. Say on.

MORT. I scarce, my Liege, had numbered twenty years,
Trained in the path of strictest discipline,
And nurs'd in deadliest hate to Papacy,
When, led by irresistible desire
For foreign travel, I resolv'd to leave
My country and its puritanic faith

Far, far behind me. Soon, with rapid speed,
I flew through France and bent my eager course
On to the plains of far-fam'ed Italy.
'Twas then the time of the great Jubilee,
And crowds of palmers fill'd the public roads;
Each image was adorn'd with garlands; 'twas
As if all human-kind were wand'ring forth
In pilgrimage towards the heav'nly kingdom.
The tide of the believing multitude
Bore me, too, onward with resistless force,
Into the streets of Rome.
I ne'er had felt the power of art till now.
The Church that rear'd me hates the charms of sense;
It tolerates no image, it adores
But the unseen, the incorporeal word.
What were my feelings, then, as I approach'd
The threshold of the churches.

MARY. O spare me, sir! No further. Spread no more
Life's verdant carpet out before my eyes.
Remember I am wretched and a prisoner.

MORT. I was a prisoner, too, my Queen; but swift
My prison-gates flew open, when at once
My spirit felt its liberty and hail'd
The smiling dawn of life. I learn'd to burst
Each narrow prejudice of education.
Full many noble Scots, who saw my zeal,
Encourag'd me, and with the gallant French
They kindly led me to your princely uncle,
The Cardinal of Guise.

MARY. You've seen him then, — the much lov'd, honor'd man
Who was the guardian of my tender years?
O! speak of him!

MORT. The holy man descended from his height,
And deign'd to teach me the important creed
Of the true Church, and dissipate my doubts.
So I return'd
Back to the bosom of the holy Church,
And at his feet abjur'd my heresies.
The duties of his office call'd him soon
To France, and I was sent by him to Rheims.

There, 'mongst the Scots, I found the noble Morgan
And your true Lesley, Ross's learned bishop.
As I one day
Roam'd through the Bishop's dwelling, I was struck
With a fair female portrait; with magic might
It mov'd my inmost soul, and there I stood
Speechless and overmaster'd by my feelings.
"Well," cried the Bishop, "may you linger thus
In deep emotion near this lovely face!
For the most beautiful of womankind
Is also matchless in calamity.

(MARY *is in great agitation.* *He pauses.*)

Then he began, with moving eloquence,
To paint the suff'rings of your martyrdom;
He showed me, then, your lofty pedigree,
And your descent from Tudor's royal House.
He prov'd to me that you alone have right
To reign in England, not this upstart Queen.
And now I know that your undoubted right
To England's throne has been your only wrong.
This realm is justly yours by heritage,
In which you innocently pine as pris'ner.

MARY. O this unhappy right! 'Tis this alone
Which is the source of all my sufferings.

MORT. Just at this time the tidings reached my ears,
Of your committal to my uncle's care.
It seem'd to be a loud decree of fate,
That it had chosen me to rescue you.
My friends concur with me; the Cardinal
Bestows on me his counsel and his blessing,
And tutors me in the hard task of feigning.
The plan in haste digested, I commenced
My journey homewards, and ten days ago
On England's shores I landed. Oh, my Queen,

(*He pauses.*)

I saw then, not your picture, but yourself.
O! what a treasure do these walls enclose!
No prison this, but the abode of gods,
More splendid far than England's royal Court.
It is a prudent policy in her

To bury you so deep! All England's youth
Would rise at once in general mutiny,
And not a sword lie quiet in its sheath,
In all this peaceful isle, if Britons once
Beheld their captive Queen.
MARY. 'Twere well with her,
If ev'ry Briton saw her with your eyes!
MORT. Were each, like me, a witness of your wrongs,
Your meekness, and the noble fortitude
With which you suffer these indignities,
Would you not then emerge from all these trials
Like a true Queen?
Yet fearfully the fatal time draws near,
I can delay no longer — can no more
Conceal the dreadful news.
MARY. My sentence then!
Is it pronounc'd? Speak freely — I can bear it.
MORT. (*falls on his knees*). It is pronounc'd! The two-and-forty judges
Have giv'n the verdict, "guilty."
MARY (*collected*). Sir, I am not surpris'd nor terrified.
I have been long prepar'd for such a message.
Too well I know my judges.
I know their aim; they mean to keep me here
In everlasting bondage, and to bury,
In this, my prison, me and my rightful claims.
MORT. O! no, my gracious Queen, they stop not there.
No dungeon can inter you deep enough;
Your death alone can make her throne secure.
MARY. Will she then dare
To lay my crown'd head on the fatal block?
MORT. She will most surely dare it, doubt it not.
MARY. And fears she not the dread revenge of France?
Will not the King of Spain rise up in arms?
MORT. (*rising*). She fears not a collected world in arms,
If with her people she remain at peace.
This land, my Queen, has, in these latter days,
Seen many a royal woman from the throne
Descend, and mount the scaffold. Her own mother,
And Cath'rine Howard, trod this fatal path;
And was not Lady Grey's a crowned head?

MARY (*after a pause*). No, Mortimer, vain fears have blinded you;
'Tis but the honest care of your true heart
Which conjures up these empty apprehensions.
It is not, Sir, the scaffold that I fear.
There are so many still and secret means
By which her Majesty of England may
Set all my claims to rest. O, trust me, ere
An executioner is found for me,
Assassins will be hir'd to do their work.
'Tis that which makes me tremble, Mortimer.
I never lift the goblet to my lips
Without an inward shudd'ring, lest the draught
May have been mingled by my sister's love.
MORT. No; neither open nor disguised murder
Shall e'er prevail against you. Fear no more;
All is prepar'd; twelve nobles of the land
Are my confed'rates, and have pledg'd to-day,
Their faith to free you from this sad captivity.
MARY. It is in vain; all England guards
My prison gates; Elizabeth's free will
Alone can open them.
MORT. Expect not that.
MARY. One man alone on earth can open them.
MORT. O! let me know his name!
MARY. Lord Leicester.
MORT. He!
(*Starts back in wonder.*)
The Earl of Leicester! Your most bloody foe,
The fav'rite of Elizabeth! Through him?
MARY. If I am to be sav'd at all, 'twill be
Through him, and him alone. Go to him, Sir.
Freely confide in him; and, as a proof
You come from me, present this paper to him.
(*She takes a paper from her bosom;* MORTIMER *draws back, and hesitates to take it.*)
It doth contain my portrait.
MORT. (*takes it*). O, my Queen! explain
This mystery.
MARY. Lord Leicester will resolve it.

Confide in him, and he'll confide in you.
Who comes?

KEN (**entering** *hastily at* R. 2 E., *and crossing to* MARY).
'Tis Paulet; and he brings with him
A nobleman from court.

MORT. (R.). It is Lord Burleigh.
Collect yourself, my Queen, and strive to hear
The news he brings with equanimity.

(*He retires hurriedly up stage, and* **exits** *through* R. 4 E., *followed by* KENNEDY, *who remains* R., *up stage.*)

Enter LORD BURLEIGH, *and* PAULET, R. 2 E

PAUL. (R. C.). You wished to-day assurance of your fate;
My Lord of Burleigh brings it to you now.

BUR. (R.). I come deputed from the court of justice.

MARY (C.). Lord Burleigh lends that court his willing tongue,
Which was already guided by his spirit.

PAUL. You speak as if no stranger to the sentence.

MARY. Lord Burleigh brings it; therefore do I know it.
But to the matter, Sir.

BUR. (*approaching to* R. C. *while* PAULET *crosses down* R.).
You have acknowledg'd
The jurisdiction of the two-and-forty.

MARY. My Lord, excuse me if I am oblig'd
So soon to interrupt you. I acknowledg'd,
Say you, the competence of the commission?
I never have acknowledg'd it, my Lord;
How could I so? I could not give away
My own prerogative, th' intrusted rights
Of my own people, the inheritance
Of my own son, and ev'ry monarch's honor.
It is enacted by the English laws
That ev'ry one who stands accus'd of crime
Shall plead before a jury of his equals.
Who is my equal in this high commission?
Kings only are my peers.

BUR. Acknowledge you the court or not, that is
Only a point of mere formality,
Which cannot here arrest the course of justice.

You breathe the air of England; you enjoy
The law's protection and its benefits;
You therefore are its subject.
MARY. Sir, I breathe
The air within an English prison walls.
Is that to live in England; to enjoy
Protection from its laws? I scarcely know
And never have I pledged my faith to keep them.
I am no member of this realm; I am
An independent and a foreign queen.
BUR. And do you think that the mere name of Queen
Can serve you as a charter to foment,
In other countries, with impunity,
This bloody discord! Where would be the state's
Security, if the stern sword of justice
Could not as freely smite the guilty brow
Of the imperial stranger as the beggar's?
MARY. I do not wish to be exempt from judgment,
It is the judges only I disclaim.
BUR. The judges? How now, Madam! Are they then
Base wretches, snatch'd at hazard from the crowd?
Vile wranglers, that make sale of truth and justice?
Are they not all the foremost of this land,
Too independent to be else than honest,
And too exalted not to soar above
The fear of Kings or base servility?
Stands not the rev'rend Primate at their head —
The pious shepherd of his faithful people.
The learned Talbot, Keeper of the Seals,
And Howard, who commands our conqu'ring fleets?
Say, then, could England's sovereign do more
Than, out of all the monarchy, elect
The very noblest and appoint them judges
In this great suit? And were it probable
That party hatred could corrupt *one* heart,
Can forty chosen men unite to speak
A sentence just as passion gives command?
MARY (*after a short pause*). Yes, truly, were these lords as
you describe them,
I must be mute; my cause were lost indeed
Beyond all hope if they pronounc'd me guilty.

But, sir, these names, which you are pleas'd to praise,
These very men, whose weight you think will crush me,
I see performing, in the history
Of these dominions, very different parts.
I see this noble rev'rend House of Lords,
Venal alike with the corrupted Commons,
Make statutes and annul them, ratify
A marriage and dissolve it, as the voice
Of power commands. To-day it disinherits,
And brands the royal daughters of the realm
With the vile name of bastards, and to-morrow
Crowns them as queens and leads them to the throne.
I see them in four reigns, with pliant conscience,
Four times abjure their faith; renounce the Pope
With Henry, yet retain the old belief;
Reform themselves with Edward; hear the mass
Again with Mary; with Elizabeth,
Who governs now, reform themselves again.

BUR. You say you are not vers'd in England's laws.
You seem well read, methinks, in her disasters.

MARY. And these men are my judges?
(*As* LORD BURLEIGH *seems to wish to speak.*)
My Lord Treas'rer,
Tow'rds you I will be just; be you but just
To me. 'Tis said that you consult with zeal
The good of England and of England's Queen;
Are honest, watchful, indefatigable.
I will believe it.
I do not doubt, besides yourself, there are
Among my judges many upright men.
But they are Protestants, are eager all
For England's quiet, and they sit in judgment
On me, the Queen of Scotland and the Papist.
It is an ancient saying that the Scots
And English to each other are unjust;
And hence the rightful custom that a Scot
Against an Englishman, or Englishman
Against a Scot, cannot be heard in judgment.
Necessity prescrib'd this cautious law;
Deep policy oft lies in ancient customs.
My Lord, we must respect them. Nature cast

Into the ocean these two fiery nations
Upon this plank, and she divided it
Unequally, and bade them fight for it.
No foe oppresses England but the Scot
Becomes his firm ally; no civil war
Inflames the towns of Scotland but the English
Add fuel to the fire. This raging hate
Will never be extinguish'd till, at last,
One parliament in concord shall unite them,
One common sceptre rule throughout the isle.

BUR. And from a Stuart, then, should England hope
This happiness?

MARY. O! why should I deny it?
Yes, I confess, I cherish'd the fond hope,
To join in freedom, 'neath the olive's shade,
Two gen'rous realms in lasting happiness!

BUR. An evil way you took to this good end,
To set the realm on fire, and through the flames
Of civil war to strive to mount the throne.

MARY. I wish'd not that. I wish'd it not, by Heaven!
When did I strive at that? Where are your proofs?

BUR. I came not hither to dispute; your cause
Is no more subject to a war of words.
(*Producing the verdict, and reading.*)
Last year it was enacted, "If a plot
Henceforth should rise in England in the name
Or for the benefit of any claimant
To England's crown, that justice should be done
On such pretender, and the guilty party
Be prosecuted unto death."

MARY. Lord Burleigh,
Can you deny that this same statute
Was made for my destruction, and nought else?

BUR. It should have acted as a warning to you;
Yet, truly warn'd, you plung'd into the deep.
With Babington, the traitor, and his bands
Of murderous companions, were you leagued.
You knew of all, and from your prison led
Their treasonous plottings with a deep-laid plan.

MARY. When did I that, my Lord? Let them produce
The documents.

BUR. You have already seen them.
They were, before the court, presented to you.
MARY. Mere copies written by another hand.
BUR. Before his execution, Babington
Confess'd they were the same which he receiv'd.
MARY. Why was he in his lifetime not produc'd
Before my face? Why was he then despatch'd
So quickly that he could not be confronted
With her whom he accus'd?
BUR. Besides, my Lady,
Your secretaries, Curl and Nau, declare
On oath they are the very selfsame letters
Which, from your lips, they faithfully transcrib'd.
The oath they swore was free and unconstrain'd.
MARY. But not before my face! How now, my Lord.
The witnesses you name are still alive;
Let them appear against me, face to face!
And there repeat what they have testified!
Why am I, then, denied that privilege,
That right, which e'en the murderer enjoys?
I know from Talbot's mouth, my former keeper,
That in this reign a statute has been pass'd,
Which orders that the plaintiff be confronted
With the defendant; is it so, good Paulet?
I e'er have known you as an honest man —
Now prove it to me; tell me, on your conscience,
If such a law exist or not, in England?
PAUL. Madam, there does; that is the law in England.
I must declare the truth.
MARY. Well, then, my lord,
If I am treated by the law of England
So hardly, when that law oppresses me,
Say, why avoid this selfsame country's law,
When 'tis for my advantage? Answer me;
Why was not Babington confronted with me?
Why not my servants, who are both alive?
BUR. Be not so hasty, lady; 'tis not only
Your plot with Babington —
It has been prov'd that you have corresponded
With the Ambassador of Spain, Mendoza —
MARY. Stick to the point, my Lord.

BUR. That you called
Into this kingdom foreign pow'rs, and rous'd
All kings in Europe to a war with England.
MARY. And were it so, my Lord — though I deny it —
But e'en suppose it was so, I am kept
Imprison'd here against all laws of nations.
I came not into England sword in hand —
I came a suppliant; and at the hands
Of my imperial kinswoman I claim'd
The sacred rights of hospitality,
When power seized upon me, and prepared
To rivet fetters where I hop'd protection.
Say, is my conscience bound, then, to this realm?
What are the duties that I owe to England?
I should but exercise a sacred right if I
Roused and incited ev'ry state in Europe,
For my protection to unite in arms.

WARN curtain.

For 'tis not justice, but mere violence,
Which is the question 'tween myself and England.
BUR. (*significantly*). Talk not, my lady, of the dreadful right
Of pow'r; 'tis seldom on the pris'ner's side.
MARY. I am the weak; she is the mighty one.
'Tis well, my Lord. Let her then use her pow'r;
Let her destroy me; let me bleed, that she
May live secure. But let her then confess
That she hath exercised her pow'r alone,
And not contaminate the name of justice.
Though she may murder me, she cannot judge me.

RING curtain.

Let her no longer strive to join the fruits
Of vice with virtue's fair and angel show;
But let her dare to seem the thing she is.

(**Exit** *with dignity at* L., *followed by* HANNAH KENNEDY. PAULET *and* BURLEIGH *left standing* R. *and* R. C.)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

Scene. — *London. A hall in the Palace of Westminster. Doors* L. *and* R.; *arched entrance at* C. *in flat. Throne chair set diagonally at* R. *up stage, approached by three steps. Discover* QUEEN ELIZABETH *seated thereon.* LEICESTER *is standing at* R. *of throne, a little down stage;* TALBOT *and* BURLEIGH *stand at* L. C., *a little down stage, with a group of French and English gentlemen.* L'AUBESPINE *and* BELLIEVRE *are kneeling down* C., *facing the* QUEEN. *It is near the end of a formal council.*

LIGHTS full up at rise.

READY petition at C. R. for Paulet and letter for Mortimer.

BEL. Great Majesty of England, suffer us
To take our leave, and to our royal master,
The Duke of Anjou, bring the happy news.

ELIZ. Press me no further now, my lord ambassador.
It is not now a time, I must repeat,
To kindle here the joyful marriage torch.
The heav'ns low'r black and heavy o'er this land,
And weeds of mourning would become me better
Than the magnificence of bridal robes.

BEL. We only ask your Majesty to promise
Your royal hand when brighter days shall come.

ELIZ. (*looking thoughtfully at* LEICESTER, *whose eyes do not meet hers. The courtiers also furtively watch him during the entire scene*).
My wish was ever to remain unmarried,
And I had plac'd my greatest pride in this,
That men hereafter on my tomb might read:
"Here rests the virgin Queen." But my good subjects
Are not content that this should be; they think,
E'en now they often think, upon the time
When I shall be no more. 'Tis not enough
That blessings now are shower'd upon this land
They ask a sacrifice for future welfare,

And I must offer up my liberty,
My virgin liberty, my greatest good,
To satisfy my people. Thus they'd force
A lord and master on me. 'Tis by this
I see that I am nothing but a woman
In their regard; and yet methought that I
Had govern'd like a man, and like a king.

L'AUB. Great Queen, you have upon your throne done honor
To ev'ry virtue.
'Tis true, the man exists not who deserves
That you to him should sacrifice your freedom;
But —

ELIZ. My lord ambassador, a marriage union
With France's royal son would do me honor.
I do not know, in Europe, any prince
To whom with less reluctance I would yield
My greatest treasure, my dear liberty.
Let this confession satisfy your master.

BEL. It gives the *fairest* hope, and yet it gives
Nothing *but* hope; my master wishes more.

ELIZ. What wishes he?

(*She takes a ring from her finger and thoughtfully examines it.*)

The ring denotes
Marriage; and 'tis of rings a chain is form'd.
Convey this present to his Highness; 'tis
As yet no chain, it binds me not as yet.
But out of it may grow a link to bind me.

BEL. (*approaching to receive the ring and kneeling again on steps of the throne*).
This present, in his name, upon my knees,
I do receive, great Queen, and press the kiss
(*Bending over her hand.*)
Of homage on the hand of her who is
Henceforth my princess.

ELIZ. (*beckoning to* LEICESTER, *who approaches her. She takes blue ribbon of Order of Garter from his neck and places it on that of the kneeling* BELLIEVRE. LEICESTER *returns gloomily to his place*).
Invest his highness with this ornament

As I invest you with it, and receive you
Into the duties of my gallant order;
And "Honi soit qui mal y pense." Thus
Perish all jealousy between our several realms,
And let the bond of confidence unite
Henceforth the crowns of Britain and of France.

BEL. Most sovereign Queen, this is a day of joy.

(*He retires to place.* L'AUBESPINE *rises from his knees, and both retire backward slowly and* **exeunt** C., *all the courtiers bowing low.*)

BUR. (*advancing to* C., *and bending low to the* QUEEN).
Illustrious sovereign, thou crown'st to-day
The fervent wishes of thy people.
Now but one care alone disturbs this land.
It is a sacrifice which every voice
Demands! O! grant but this, and England's peace
Will be established now and ever more.

ELIZ. What wish they still, my Lord? Speak.

BUR. They demand
The Stuart's head. If to thy people thou
Wouldst now secure the precious boon of freedom,
And the fair light of truth so dearly won,
Then she must die.
Thou must resolve to strike, or suffer.
Her life is death to thee, her death thy life.

ELIZ. My lord, you bear a melancholy office.
I know the purity which guides your zeal,
The solid wisdom which informs your speech;
And yet I hate this wisdom when it calls
For blood, I hate it in my inmost soul.
Think of a milder counsel. Good, my Lord
Of Shrewsbury, we crave your judgment here.

TAL. (*advancing as* BURLEIGH *retires to* L.). Long may you live, my Queen, to be the joy
Of your delighted people, to prolong
Peace and its envied blessings in this realm.
Ne'er hath this isle beheld such happy days
Since it was govern'd by its native kings.
O, let it never buy its happiness
With its good name.

ELIZ. Forbid it, Heaven, that our good name be stain'd.

TAL. Then must you find some other way than this
To save thy kingdom, for the sentence pass'd
Of death against the Stuart is unjust.
ELIZ. Then, it seems,
My council and my parliament have err'd;
Each bench of justice in the land is wrong,
Which did, with one accord, admit this right.
TAL. (*after a pause*). O, hear the gracious dictates of thy heart,
And show that mercy, not severity,
Is the best virtue to adorn a crown.
ELIZ. Lord Shrewsb'ry is a fervent advocate
For mine and England's enemy. I must
Prefer those counsellors who wish *my* welfare.
TAL. Suffer an old
And faithful counsellor (whom nought on earth
Can tempt, on the grave's brink) to exercise
The pious duty of humanity.
I do not take the part of her misdeeds.
Transplanted in her early youth to France,
The court of levity and thoughtless joys,
There, in the round of constant dissipation,
She never heard the earnest voice of truth.
She was deluded by the glare of vice,
And driven onward by the stream of ruin.
Hers was the vain possession of a face,
And she outshone all others of her sex
As far in beauty, as in noble birth.
ELIZ. (*haughtily*). Collect yourself, my Lord of Shrewsbury;
Those charms must surely be without compare
Which can engender, in an elder's blood,

(TALBOT *retires to* L., *and* LEICESTER *advances to* C., *and faces* ELIZABETH.)

Such fire. My Lord of Leicester, you alone
Are silent. Does the subject which has made
Him eloquent, deprive you of your speech?
LEIC. Amazement ties my tongue, my Queen, to think
That they should fill thy soul with such alarms.
To think this lackland Queen of Scotland, she

Who could not save her own poor throne, should be
At once thy terror and thy prisoner.
By Heavens, I hope thou wilt full many a year
Walk o'er the Stuart's grave, and ne'er become
Thyself the instrument of her sad end.

BUR. Lord Leicester hath not always held this tone.

LEIC. 'Tis true, I in the court of justice gave
My verdict for her death; here, in the council,
I may consistently speak otherwise.
Is this a time to fear her power, when France,
Her only succor, has abandon'd her?
'Tis therefore my advice to leave the sentence,
By which her life is forfeit, in full force.
Let her live on; but let her live beneath
The headsman's axe, and, in the very hour
One arm is lifted for her, let it fall.

ELIZ. (*rises.* LEICESTER *returns to* R.). My Lords, I now have heard your sev'ral thoughts,
And give my ardent thanks for this your zeal.
With God's assistance I will weigh your arguments
And choose what best my judgment shall approve.

Enter *at* C., *from* R., SIR AMIAS PAULET *and* MORTIMER.

ELIZ. Here comes Sir Amias Paulet; noble sir,
What tidings bring you?

PAUL. (*coming down* C., *followed by* MORTIMER; *he salutes the* QUEEN). Gracious Sovereign,
My nephew, (MORTIMER *kneels well down stage.*)
Who but lately is return'd
From foreign travel, kneels before thy feet,
And offers thee his first and earliest homage.

(*Bowing, backs to* L., *to group of courtiers.*)

MORT. Long live my royal mistress! Happiness
And glory form a crown to grace her brows!

ELIZ. Arise, Sir Knight, and welcome here in England.
You've made, I hear, the tour, have been in France
And Rome, and tarried, too, some time at Rheims.
Tell me what plots our enemies are hatching?

MORT. May God confound them all! And may the darts

Which they shall aim against my Sovereign,
Recoiling, strike their own perfidious breasts!

ELIZ. (*looking steadfastly at* MORTIMER). Your enemies have said that you frequented
The schools at Rheims, and have abjur'd your faith.

MORT. So I pretended, that I must confess,
Such was my anxious wish to serve my Queen.

(ELIZABETH *gazes fixedly at him a moment, and then waves her hand.* MORTIMER *rises and backs to* R., *near* LEICESTER. PAULET *again advances.*)

ELIZ. (*to* PAULET, *who holds out papers to her*). What have you there?

PAUL. 'Tis from the Queen of Scots.
'Tis a petition, and to thee address'd.

BUR. (*advancing from* L. *and hastily catching at it*). Give me the paper.

PAUL. (*advancing to the throne*). By your leave, my Lord
High Treasurer; the lady order'd me
To bring it to her Majesty's own hands.

(*Kneels on steps of throne. The* QUEEN *takes the letter. As she reads it,* MORTIMER *and* LEICESTER *speak some words in private.* PAULET *rises and retires to* R. C.)

BUR. (R. *to* PAULET). What may the purport of the letter be?
Idle complaints, from which one ought to screen
The Queen's too tender heart.

PAUL (R. C.). What it contains
She did not hide from me. She asks a boon;
She begs to be admitted to the grace
Of speaking with the Queen.

BUR. It cannot be.

TAL. Why not? Her supplication's not unjust.

BUR. For her, the base encourager of murder —
Her, who hath thirsted for our sov'reign's blood,
The privilege to see the royal presence
Is forfeited.

TAL. And if the Queen is gracious, sir, are you
The man to hinder pity's soft emotions?

BUR. She is condemn'd to death.
The sentence cannot have its execution
If the Queen's Majesty approaches her,
For pardon still attends the royal presence.
ELIZ. (*having read the letter, dries her tears*). O! what is man! What is the bliss of earth!
To what extremities is she reduc'd
Who with such proud and splendid hopes began!
Who, call'd to sit on the most ancient throne
Of Christendom, misled by vain ambition,
Hop'd with a triple crown to deck her brows!
How is her language alter'd since the time
When she assum'd the arms of England's crown,
And by the flatt'rers of her Court was styled
Sole monarch of the two Britannic isles!
Forgive me, Lords, my heart is cleft in twain,
Anguish possesses me and my soul bleeds
To think that earthly goods are so unstable,
And that the dreadful fate which rules mankind
Should threaten mine own house, and scowl so near me.
TAL. (*advancing to* C., *up stage*). O, Queen!
Hark to this heav'nly guidance.
Stretch forth your hand to raise this abject Queen,
And, like the luminous vision of an angel,
Descend into her gaol's sepulchral night.
BUR. (*advancing to* L. C., *down stage*). Be steadfast, mighty Queen; let no emotion
Of seeming laudable humanity mislead thee.
LEIC. (R. C.). Let us, my Lords, remain within our bounds;
The Queen is wise, and doth not need our counsels.
ELIZ. Retire, my Lords. We shall, perhaps, find means
To reconcile the tender claims of pity
With what necessity imposes on us.
And now retire.

(*The Lords retire, the courtiers first, then* TALBOT, PAULET *and* BURLEIGH. LEICESTER *and* MORTIMER *go last. All back formally up stage and* **exeunt** *through central arch. All go to* R., *save* LEICESTER, *who goes to* L. *The* QUEEN *calls* MORTIMER *back.*)

Sir Edward Mortimer!

(*He advances to* R. C. *and bows before her.* ELIZABETH, *having measured him for some time in silence with her eyes, descends from her throne with the aid of a Page to* C., *where she dismisses all the Pages.*)

You have shown a spirit of adventurous courage
And self-possession far beyond your years.
Fate calls you to a lofty scene of action;
I prophesy it and can, happily
For you, fulfil myself my own prediction.

MORT. Illustrious mistress, what I am, and all
I can accomplish, is devoted to you.

ELIZ. You've made acquaintance with the foes of England.
Their hate against me is implacable;
Their fell designs are inexhaustible.
As yet, indeed, Almighty Providence
Hath shielded me; but on my brows the crown
Forever trembles, while *she* lives who fans
Their bigot-zeal and animates their hopes.

MORT. She lives no more, as soon as you command it.

ELIZ. O, sir! I thought I saw my labor's end,
And I am come no farther than at first.
I wish'd to let the laws of England act,
And keep my own hands pure from blood's defilement.
The sentence is pronounc'd — what gain I by it?
It must be executed, Mortimer,
And I must authorize the execution.
The blame will ever light on me, I must
Avow it, nor can save appearances.
I must take care that my connivance in
Her death be wrapp'd in everlasting doubt.
Safety lies only in obscurity.
Those measures are the worst that stand avow'd.

MORT. (*seeking to learn her meaning*). Then it perhaps were best —

ELIZ. (*quick*). Ay, surely 'twere
The best. O, sir, my better angel speaks
Through you; go on, then, worthy sir, conclude.
You are in earnest, you examine deep,
Have quite a different spirit from your uncle.

MORT. Have you imparted, then, your wishes to him?

ELIZ. I am sorry that I have.
MORT. Excuse his age.
The old man is grown scrupulous; such bold
Adventures ask the enterprising heart
Of youth —
ELIZ. And may I venture, then, on *you* —
MORT. My hand I'll lend thee; save then as thou canst
Thy reputation —
ELIZ. Ah, sir, if you could
But waken me some morning with this news —
"Maria Stuart, your blood-thirsty foe,
Breath'd yesternight her last"—
MORT. Depend on me.
ELIZ. When shall my head lie calmly down to sleep?
MORT. The next new moon shall terminate thy fears.
ELIZ. And be the selfsame happy day the dawn
Of your preferment — so God speed you, sir.

Exit *at* C. *to* L.

MORT. (C.). Go, false, deceitful Queen! As thou deludest
The world, e'en so I cozen thee; 'tis right
Thus to betray thee; 'tis a worthy deed.
Look I then like a murd'rer? Hast thou read
Upon my brow such base dexterity?
Thou wilt exalt me!
What art thou, poor one, and what canst thou proffer?
I must attend Lord Leicester and deliver
Her letter to him. 'Tis a hateful charge —
I have no confidence in this court puppet —
I can effect her rescue, *I* alone;
Be danger, honor, and the prize my own.

(*As he is going up stage*, PAULET **enters** C. *from* R., *and meets him* C.)

PAUL. (C., *up stage*). What said the Queen to you?
MORT. (R. C.). 'Twas nothing, sir;
Nothing of consequence.
PAUL. (*looking at him earnestly*). Hear, Mortimer!
It is a false and slipp'ry ground on which
You tread. The grace of princes is alluring,
Youth loves ambition — let not yours betray you.

Stand fast, my nephew — purchase not
Too dear, nor stain your conscience with a crime.
MORT. What are these fears? What are you dreaming of?
PAUL. (*down stage*, L.). Away dissimulation!
I know the deed the Queen propos'd to you.
She hopes that your ambitious youth will prove
More docile than my rigid age. But say,
Have you then pledg'd your promise?
MORT. (R.). Uncle!
PAUL. If you have done so, I abandon you,
And lay my curse upon you —
LEIC. (**entering** C. *from* L.). Worthy sir!
I with your nephew wish a word. The Queen
Is graciously inclin'd to him; she wills
That to his custody the Scottish Queen
Be with full powers entrusted. She relies
On his fidelity.
PAUL. Relies! 'Tis well — (*Up stage.*)
LEIC. What say you, sir?
PAUL. Her Majesty relies
On him; and I, my noble Lord, rely
Upon myself and my two open eyes.

Exit, C. *to* R.

LEIC. (*surprised, as he comes down* C.). What ailed the knight?
MORT. (R. C.). My Lord, I cannot tell
What angers him— the confidence, perhaps,
The Queen so suddenly confers on me.
LEIC. Are you deserving, then, of confidence?
MORT. This would I ask of you, my Lord of Leicester.
LEIC. You said you wished to speak with me in private.
MORT. Assure me first that I may safely venture.
LEIC. Who gives me an assurance on your side?
Let not my want of confidence offend you;
I see you, sir, exhibit at this court
Two diff'rent aspects; one of them *must* be
A borrow'd one; but which of them is real?
MORT. The self-same doubts I have concerning you.
LEIC. Lead you the way of confidence, I'll follow.

MORT. (*producing suddenly the letter*). Here is a letter from the Queen of Scotland.

LEIC. (*alarmed, catches hastily at the letter, and looks fearfully about*). Speak softly, sir. (*Opens it.*) What see I? Oh, it is Her picture!

(*Kisses and examines it with speechless joy — a pause. Crosses to* L.)

MORT. (*who has watched him closely the whole time. Crosses to* R.). Now, my Lord, I can believe you.

LEIC. (*having hastily run through the letter*). You know the purport of this letter, sir? (*Hides it in his doublet.*)

MORT. Not I.

LEIC. Indeed! She surely hath inform'd you —

MORT. Nothing hath she inform'd me of. She said
You would explain this riddle to me — 'tis
To me a riddle that the Earl of Leicester —
The far-fam'd fav'rite of Elizabeth,
The open, bitter enemy of Mary,
And one of those who spoke her mortal sentence,
Should be the man from whom the Queen expects
Deliv'rance from her woes.

LEIC. Tell me, sir,
First, how it comes that you should take so warm
An int'rest in her fate; and what it was
Gain'd you her confidence?

MORT. My Lord, I can,
And in few words, explain this mystery.
I lately have at Rome abjur'd my creed,
And stand in correspondence with the Guises.
A letter from the Cardinal Archbishop
Was my credential with the Queen of Scots.

LEIC. I am acquainted, sir, with your conversion;
'Twas that which wak'd my confidence towards you.
You seem surpris'd sir, that my heart is turn'd
So suddenly towards the captive Queen.
In truth, I never hated her; the times
Have forc'd me to appear her enemy.
She was, as you well know, my destined bride
Long since, e'er she bestow'd her hand on Darnley,
While yet the beams of glory round her smil'd.

At that far time the lady's hand I deem'd
Too insignificant for me; I hoped
To be the husband of the Queen of England.
MORT. It is well known she gave you preference
Before all others.
LEIC. So, indeed, it seem'd.
Now, after ten lost years of tedious courtship,
And hateful self-constraint, I am to lose
At the very goal the prize.
Thus fall my hopes. I strove to seize a plank
To bear me in this shipwreck of my fortunes,
And my eye turn'd itself towards the hope
Of former days once more; then Mary's image
Within me was renew'd, in youth and beauty.
Then wak'd the hope in me that I might still
Deliver and possess her; I contriv'd
To send her, through a faithful hand, the news
Of my conversion to her interests;
And in this letter which you brought me she
Assures me that she pardons me and offers
Herself as guerdon, if I rescue her.
MORT. But you attempted nothing for her rescue.
You let her be condemn'd without a word;
You gave, yourself, your verdict for her death.
LEIC. But do not think that I would patiently
Have seen her led to death. No, sir; I hop'd,
And still I hope, to ward off all extremes,
Till I can find some certain means to save her.
MORT. These are already found. My Lord of Leicester,
Your gen'rous confidence in me deserves
A like return. *I* will deliver her.
I have confederates, and all is ready.
LEIC. You have confederates, accomplices?
Alas! In what rash enterprise would you
Engage me? And these friends, know they *my* secret?
MORT. Fear not; our plan was laid without your help;
Without your help it would have been accomplish'd,
Had she not signified her resolution
To owe her liberty to you alone.
LEIC. We must avoid all violence; it is
Too dangerous an enterprise.

MORT. Delay
Is also dangerous.
LEIC. I tell you, sir,
'Tis not to be attempted —
MORT. My Lord,
Too hazardous for *you* who would possess her;
But *we*, who only wish to rescue her,
We are more bold.
LEIC. Fool-hardiness and madness! is this courage?
MORT. This prudence is not bravery, my Lord.
LEIC. If *we* are ruin'd, she must fall with us.
MORT. If *we* risk nothing, she will ne'er be rescued.
LEIC. With blind and hasty rashness you destroy
The plans which I so happily had framed.
MORT. And what were then the plans which *you* had fram'd?
What have *you* done, then, to deliver her?
And how if I were miscreant enough
To murder her, as was propos'd to me
This moment by Elizabeth, and which
She looks upon as certain; only name
The measures *you* have taken to protect her?
LEIC. Did the Queen give you, then, this bloody order?
MORT. She was deceiv'd in me, as Mary is
In you.
LEIC. And have you promis'd it; say, have you?
MORT. That she might not engage another's hand,
I offer'd mine.
LEIC. Well done, sir — that was right.
This gives us leisure, for she rests secure
Upon your bloody service, and the sentence
Is unfulfill'd the while, and we gain time.
MORT. And what is gain'd by this? When she discovers
That I am cheating her — that Mary lives —
Are we not where we were?
Away with feigning — act an open part,
And, like a loyal knight, protect your fair;
Fight a good fight for her!
LEIC. Where would your giddy madness hurry you?
Follow my counsel — venture nothing rashly.
Some one approaches — go —

(*Hastily separating from* MORTIMER, LEICESTER *starts up stage.*)

MORT. (*following him desperately*). And Mary hopes —
Shall I return to her with empty comfort?

LEIC. (*pausing at* C.). Bear her my vows of everlasting love.

MORT. (*angrily*). Bear them yourself! I offer'd my assistance
As her deliv'rer, not your messenger.

Exit C. *to* R. LEICESTER *stands perplexed at* C.
Enter ELIZABETH *at* C. *from* L.

ELIZ. (C., *up stage*). Say, who was here? I heard the sound of voices.

LEIC. (*turning round quickly and perplexed, on hearing the* QUEEN). It was young Mortimer —

ELIZ. How now, my lord;
Why so confus'd?

LEIC. (*collecting himself*). Your presence is the cause.
Ne'er did I see thy beauty so resplendent.
My sight is dazzled by thy heavenly charms.
Oh! —

ELIZ. Whence this sigh? (*Comes down* C.)

LEIC. (R. C.). Have I no reason, then,
To sigh? When I behold you in your glory,
I feel anew, with pain unspeakable,
The loss which threatens me.

ELIZ. What loss, my Lord?

LEIC. Your heart — your own inestimable self. (*Kneels.*)
Soon will you feel yourself within the arms
Of your young ardent husband, highly bless'd.
He will possess your heart without a rival.
He is of royal blood — that am not *I*.

ELIZ. Oh! pity me, my Dudley; do not blame me —
I cannot ask my heart. Oh, *that* had chosen
Far otherwise! Ah, how I envy others
Who can exalt the object of their love!
The Queen of Scotland was allow'd to make
Her hand the token of her inclination;

She hath had ev'ry freedom, and hath drunk,
E'en to the very dregs, the cup of joy.
(*Motions* LEICESTER *to rise.*)
LEIC. (*rising*). And now she drinks the bitter cup of sorrow.
ELIZ. She never did respect the world's opinion;
Life was to her a sport; she never courted
The yoke to which I bow'd my willing neck.
She was the favorite of all the men,
Because she only strove to be a woman;
And youth and age became alike her suitors.
And did not even Talbot, though grey-headed,
Grow young again when speaking of her charms.
LEIC. Forgive him — for he was her keeper once,
And she has fool'd him with her cunning wiles.
ELIZ. And is it really true that she's so fair?
Pictures are flattering, and description lies;
I will trust nothing but my own conviction.
Why gaze you at me thus?
LEIC. I plac'd in thought
You and Maria Stuart, side by side.
Yes! I confess, I oft have felt a wish,
If it could be but secretly contriv'd,
To see you placed beside the Scottish Mary.
She deserves
To be thus humbled; she deserves to see,
With her own eyes, and envy's glance is keen,
Herself surpass'd; to feel herself o'ermatch'd
As much by thee in form and princely grace
As in each virtue that adorns the sex.
ELIZ. In years she has th' advantage.
LEIC. Has she so?
I never should have thought it.
ELIZ. (*with a careless air*). I'm teaz'd to grant this interview.
LEIC. She asks it
As a favor; grant it as a punishment.
Could you but now, now as you are, appear
Before her, you could find no better moment.
ELIZ. Now? No — not now — no, Leicester — this must be
Maturely weigh'd — I must with Burleigh —

LEIC. Burleigh!
To him you are but sov'reign, and as such
Alone he seeks your welfare. **WARN curtain.**

ELIZ. But would it, then, become me to behold
My kinswoman in infamy and want?
They say she is not royally attended;
Would not the sight of her distress reproach me?

LEIC. You need not cross her threshold — hear my counsel.
The hunt you mean to honor with your presence
Is in the neighborhood of Fotheringay;
Permission may be giv'n to Lady Stuart
To take the air; you meet her in the park,
As if by accident; it must not seem
To have been plann'd, and should you not incline,
You need not speak to her.

ELIZ. If I am foolish,
Be yours the fault, not mine. I would not care
To-day to cross your wishes; for to-day
I've griev'd you more than all my other subjects.

RING curtain.

(*Tenderly.*)

Let it then be your fancy. Leicester, hence
You see the free obsequiousness of love,
Which suffers that which it cannot approve.

(*Extends her hand to him.* LEICESTER *prostrates himself before her, and presses his lips to it ardently.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

Scene. — *In the Park at Fotheringay. Wood wings; landscape drop.*

Enter MARY *from* L., *running;* HANNAH KENNEDY *follows slowly.*

SUNLIGHT on.
READY horns off R.

KEN. You hasten on as if endow'd with wings —
I cannot follow you so swiftly — wait.
MARY. Freedom returns! O let me enjoy it.
(*Gleefully returning to* HANNAH, *whom she kisses as she leads her to* C.)
Let me be childish — be thou childish with me!
Freedom invites me! O let me employ it,
Skimming with winged step light o'er the lea.
Have I escaped from this mansion of mourning?
Holds me no more the sad dungeon of care?
Let me, with joy and with eagerness burning,
Drink in the free, the celestial air!
(*Hurries from one side to the other with her arms outstretched.*)
KEN. O, my dear lady! but a very little
Is your sad gaol extended; you behold not
The wall that shuts us in; these plaited tufts
Of trees hide from your sight the hated object.
MARY. Thanks to these friendly trees that hide from me
My prison walls and flatter my illusion!
Happy I now may dream myself, and free;
Why wake me from my dream's so sweet confusion?
The extended vault of heaven around me lies,
Free and unfetter'd range my wandering eyes
O'er space's vast immeasurable sea!
And those light clouds which, steering southwards, fly,
Seek the mild clime of France's genial shore.
Fast fleeting clouds! ye meteors that fly!
Could I but with you sail through the sky!
Tenderly greet the dear land of my youth!
Here I am captive! Oppress'd by my foes,
No other than you may carry my woes.
Free thro' the ether your pathway is seen,
Ye own not the power of this tyrant Queen.
KEN. Alas! dear lady! You're beside yourself,
This long-lost, long-sought freedom makes you rave.
MARY. Yonder's a fisherman returning home;
Such a draught were his as he had never seen,
Would he but rescue a poor captive Queen.
KEN. Fond, fruitless wishes! See you not from far
How we are follow'd by observing spies?

MARY. No, gentle Hannah! Trust me, not in vain
My prison gates are open'd. This small grace
Is harbinger of greater happiness.
No! I mistake not — 'tis the active hand
Of love to which I owe this kind indulgence.
I recognize in this the mighty arm
Of Leicester.

KEN. O, my dear Queen! I cannot reconcile
These contradictions. 'Twas but yesterday
That they announc'd your death, and all at once,
To-day, you have such liberty.

HUNTING horns heard at a distance.

MARY. Hear'st thou the bugle, so blithely resounding?
Hear'st thou its echoes through wood and through plain?
Oh, might I now, on my nimble steed bounding,
Join with the jocund, the frolicsome train!

HUNTING horns again heard nearer.

Again! O this sad and this pleasing remembrance!

Enter PAULET *through trees from* L., *advancing.*

PAUL. (L.). Well! have I acted right at last, my lady?
Do I for once, at least, deserve your thanks?

MARY (C.). How! Do I owe this favor, sir, to you?

PAUL. Why not to me? I visited the Court
And gave the Queen your letter.

MARY. And is this freedom, which I now enjoy,
The happy consequence?

PAUL. (*significantly*). Nor that alone;
Prepare yourself to see a greater still.

MARY. A greater still! What do you mean by that?

PAUL. You heard the bugle-horns?

MARY (*starting back with foreboding apprehension*). You frighten me!

PAUL. The Queen is hunting in the neighborhood —

MARY. What!

PAUL. In a few moments she'll appear before you.

KEN. (*hastening towards* MARY, *who is about to fall*). How fare you, dearest lady? You grow pale.

PAUL. How? Is't not well? Was it not then your pray'r?
'Tis granted now, before it was expected;
You who had ever such a ready speech,
Now summon all your powers of eloquence,
The important time to use them now is come.
MARY (*leaning on* KENNEDY *and covering her eyes*). O, why was I not told of this before?
Now I am not prepar'd for it — not now.
What, as the greatest favor, I besought,
Seems to me now most fearful. Hannah, come,
Lead me into the house, till I collect
My spirits. (*They start towards* L.)
PAUL. (C.). Stay; you must await her here.
Yes! I believe you may be well alarm'd
To stand before your judge. (*Passes to* L.)

Enter TALBOT *through trees, from* R.

MARY. 'Tis not for that,
O God! Far other thoughts possess me now.
(*Sees* TALBOT, *and advances again with* KENNEDY *to* C.)
O, worthy Shrewsbury! You come, as though
You were an angel sent to me from heav'n.
I cannot, will not see her. Save me, save me
From the detested sight!
TAL. (R. C.). Your Majesty,
Command yourself and summon all your courage;
'Tis the decisive moment of your fate.
MARY (C.). For years I've waited and prepared myself.
For this I've studied, weigh'd and written down
Each word within the tablet of my mem'ry,
That was to touch and move her to compassion.
Forgotten suddenly, effac'd is all,
And nothing lives within me at this moment,
But the fierce, burning feeling of my wrongs.
TAL. Command your wild, rebellious blood.
You must submit to stern necessity —
The pow'r is in her hand, be therefore humble.
MARY. To her? I never can.

TAL. But, pray, submit.
Speak with respect, with calmness! Strive to move
Her magnanimity; insist not now
Upon your rights, not now — 'tis not the season.
MARY. Ah! wo is me! I've pray'd for my destruction,
And, as a curse to me, my prayer is heard.
We never should have seen each other — never!
I have been hurt too grievously; she hath
Too grievously oppress'd me. No atonement
Can make us friends!
TAL. First see her, face to face.
Did I not see how she was mov'd at reading
Your letter? How her eyes were drown'd in tears?
No — she is not unfeeling; only place
More confidence in her. It was for this
That I came on before her, to entreat you
To be collected — to admonish you —
MARY (*seizing his hand*). Oh, Talbot! you have ever been my friend.
Had I but stay'd beneath your kindly care!
They have, indeed, misused me, Shrewsbury.
TAL. Let all be now forgot, and only think
How to receive her with submissiveness.
MARY. Is Burleigh with her, too, my evil genius?
TAL. No one attends her but the Earl of Leicester.
MARY. Lord Leicester?
TAL. Fear not him; it is not he
Who wishes your destruction; 'twas his work,
That here the Queen hath granted you this meeting.
MARY. Ah! Well I knew it.
TAL. What?
PAUL. The Queen approaches.

(*They all draw aside;* MARY *alone remains at* L., *leaning on* KENNEDY.)

Enter *through trees from* R., ELIZABETH, *the* EARL OF LEICESTER, *and retinue.*

ELIZ. (*to* LEICESTER, *as they come down* R.). What seat is that, my Lord?
LEIC. 'Tis Fotheringay.

ELIZ. (*to* TALBOT, *who advances to* C., *toward her*). My Lord, send back our retinue to London;
The people crowd too eager in the roads,
We'll seek a refuge in this quiet park.

(TALBOT *sends the train away. She looks steadfastly at* MARY, *as she speaks further with* PAULET, *who crosses from* L. *to salute her.*)

My honest people love me overmuch.
These signs of joy are quite idolatrous.
Thus should a God be honor'd, not a mortal.

MARY (*who the whole time has leaned, almost fainting, on* KENNEDY, *rises now erect, and her eyes meet the steady piercing look of* ELIZABETH; MARY *shudders and throws herself again upon* KENNEDY'S *bosom*). O God! from out these features speaks no heart.

ELIZ. (R. C.). What lady's that?

(*A general, embarrassed silence.*)

LEIC. (R.). You are at Fotheringay,
My Liege!

ELIZ. (*as if surprised, casting an angry look at* LEICESTER). Who hath done this, my Lord of Leicester?

LEIC. 'Tis past, my Queen; and now that Heav'n hath led
Your footsteps hither, be magnanimous;
And let sweet pity be triumphant now.

TAL. O royal mistress! yield to our entreaties;
O cast your eyes on this unhappy one,
Who stands dissolved in anguish.

(MARY *collects herself and begins to advance towards* ELIZABETH; *stops shuddering half way. Her action expresses the most violent internal struggle. Stops at* C., *with head erect and hand clasped convulsively.*)

ELIZ. How, my Lords!
Which of you, then, announc'd to me a prisoner
Bow'd down by wo?

(MARY *turns towards* L., *her face expressing the struggle with her pride.*)

I see a haughty one,
By no means humbled by calamity.

MARY (*aside*). Well, be it so; to this will I submit.
Farewell high thought, and pride of noble mind!

I will forget my dignity, and all
My sufferings; I will fall before *her* feet,
Who hath reduced me to this wretchedness.

(*She turns towards the* QUEEN; ***aloud.***)

The voice of Heav'n decides for you, my sister.
Your happy brows are now with triumph crown'd;
I bless the Power Divine which thus hath rais'd you,

(*She kneels slowly and with rebellious effort.*)

But in your turn be merciful, my sister;
Let me not lie before you thus disgraced;
Stretch forth your hand, your royal hand, to raise
Your sister from the depths of her distress.

ELIZ. (*stepping back a little up stage at* R.). You are where it becomes you, Lady Stuart;
And thankfully I prize my God's protection,
Who hath not suffer'd me to kneel a suppliant
Thus at your feet, as you now kneel at mine.

MARY (*rising to her feet with repressed anger*). Think on all earthly things, vicissitudes.
Oh! there are gods who punish haughty pride.
Respect them, honor them, the dreadful ones
Who thus before thy feet have humbled me!
Before these strangers' eyes, dishonor not
Yourself in me; profane not, nor disgrace
The royal blood of Tudor. In my veins
It flows as pure a stream as in your own.
O! for God's pity, stand not so estranged
And inaccessible,
That I may touch your heart, O! set mine free.

ELIZ. (*cold and severe*). What would you say to me, my Lady Stuart?
You wish'd to speak with me; and I, forgetting
The Queen and all the wrongs I have sustain'd,
Fulfil the pious duty of the sister,
And grant the boon you wished for of my presence.

MARY. O! how shall I begin? O, how shall I
So artfully arrange my cautious words
That they may touch, yet not offend your heart?
Strengthen my words, O Heav'n! and take from them
Whate'er might wound. Alas! I cannot speak

In my own cause without impeaching you,
And that most heavily. I wish not so.
You have not, as you ought, behav'd to me;
I am a Queen, like you, yet you have held me
Confin'd in prison. As a suppliant
I came to you, yet *you* in me insulted
The pious use of hospitality;
Slighting in me the holy law of nations,
Immur'd me in a dungeon — tore from me
My friends and servants; to unseemly want
I was exposed and hurried to the bar
Of a disgraceful, insolent tribunal.
No more of this; in everlasting silence
Be buried all the cruelties I suffer'd!
See — I will throw the blame of all on fate;
'Twas not your fault, no more than it was mine.

ELIZ. Accuse not fate! your own deceitful heart
It was, the wild ambition of your house.
As yet no enmities had pass'd between us,
When your imperious uncle, the proud priest,
Whose shameless hand grasps at all crowns, attack'd me
With unprovok'd hostility, and taught
You, but too docile, to assume my arms,
To vest yourself with my imperial title,
And meet me in the lists in mortal strife.
What arms employ'd he not to storm my throne?
But God is with me, and the haughty priest
Has not maintain'd the field. The blow was aim'd
Full at my head, but yours it is which falls!

MARY. I'm in the hand of Heav'n. You never will
Exert so cruelly the pow'r it gives you.

ELIZ. Who shall prevent me? Say, did not your uncle
Set all the kings of Europe the example,
How to conclude a peace with those they hate?
Be mine the school of Saint Bartholomew;
I only practise what your priests have taught!
Force is my only surety; no alliance
Can be concluded with a race of vipers.

MARY. O! this is but your wretched, dark suspicion!
For you have constantly regarded me
But as a stranger and an enemy.

Had you declar'd me heir to your dominions,
As is my right —
ELIZ. Name *you* my successor! The treach'rous snare!
That in my life you might seduce my people,
And, like a sly Armida, in your net
Entangle all our noble English youth,
That all might turn to the new rising sun,
And I —
MARY. O sister, rule your realm in peace;
I give up ev'ry claim to these domains.
Alas! the pinions of my soul are lam'd;
Greatness entices me no more. Your point
Is gain'd; I am but Mary's shadow now —
My noble spirit is at last broke down
By long captivity. You've done your worst
On me; you have destroy'd me in my bloom!
Now end your work, my sister; speak at length
The word which to pronounce has brought you hither;
For I will ne'er believe that you are come,
To mock unfeelingly your hapless victim.
Pronounce this word — say, "Mary, you are free;
You have already felt my pow'r — learn now
To honor too my generosity."
Say this, and I will take my life, will take
My freedom, as a present from your hands.
One word makes all undone; I wait for it.
(*Sinking slowly to her knees again.*)
Oh, let it not be needlessly delay'd.
Wo to you, if you end not with this word!
For should you not, like some divinity
Dispensing noble blessings, quit me now,
Then, sister, not for all this island's wealth,
For all the realms encircled by the deep,
Would I exchange my present lot for yours.
ELIZ. (*with triumph*). And you confess at last that you are conquer'd!
Are all your schemes run out? No more assassins
Now on the road? Will no adventurer
Attempt again for you the sad achievement?
Yes, madam, it is over. You'll seduce
No mortal more. The world has other cares;

None is ambitious of the dang'rous honor
Of being your fourth husband. You destroy
Your wooers like your husbands.
MARY (*starting angrily*). Sister, sister!
Grant me forbearance, all ye powr's of heav'n! (*Rising.*)
ELIZ. (*regards her long, with a look of proud contempt*). Those, then, my Lord of Leicester, are the charms
Which no man with impunity can view,
Near which no woman dare attempt to stand?
In sooth, this honor has been cheaply gain'd;
She who to all is common, may with ease
Become the common object of applause.
MARY. This is too much!
ELIZ. (*laughing insultingly*).
You show us now, indeed,
Your real face; till now 'twas but the mask.
MARY (*with rage, yet dignified and noble*). My sins were human, and the faults of youth.
I have never
Denied or sought to hide them. I despis'd
All false appearance, as became a Queen.
The worst of me is known, and I can say
That I am better than the fame I bear.
Wo to you! when, in time to come, the world
Shall draw the robe of honor from your deeds,
With which thy arch-hypocrisy has veil'd
The raging flames of lawless secret lust.
Virtue was not your portion from your mother;
Well know we what it was which brought the head
Of Anna Boleyn to the fatal block.
TAL. (*stepping between the* QUEENS). O! Heav'n!
(*To* MARY.)
Is this the moderation, the submission,
My lady?
MARY (*clinging in trembling anger to* KENNEDY. LEICESTER *attempts to appease* ELIZABETH). Moderation! I've supported
What human nature can support. Farewell
Lamb-hearted resignation, passive patience,
Fly to thy native heaven. Long-suppressed rancor,
O, but arm my tongue with poison'd darts!

TAL. (*to* ELIZABETH). My Liege, forgive her.

(ELIZABETH, *speechless with anger, casts enraged looks at* MARY.)

LEIC. (*in the most violent agitation; he seeks to lead* ELIZABETH *away*).

Away from this disastrous place!

MARY (*leaving* KENNEDY *and advancing on* ELIZABETH). A bastard soils,
Profanes the English throne! The gen'rous Britons
Are cheated by a juggler, whose whole figure
Is false and painted, heart as well as face!
If right prevail'd you now would in the dust
Before me lie, for I'm your rightful monarch!

(ELIZABETH ~~*covers before* MARY *and hastily*~~ **exits**; *the Lords follow her off* R. *in the greatest consternation.*)

WARN curtain.

KEN. What have you done? She has gone hence in wrath?
All hope is over now!

MARY (*still quite beside herself*). Gone hence in wrath!
She carries death within her heart. I know it!
Now I am happy, Hannah, and at last,
After whole years of sorrow and abasement,
One moment of victorious revenge!

RING curtain.

A weight falls off my heart — a weight of mountains;
I plunged the steel in my oppressor's breast.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

Scene. — *London. Ante-chamber at Westminster. Wide door at back; doors* R. *and* L.

LIGHTS full up at rise.

READY death warrant at L. for Davison.

As curtain rises, **enter** LEICESTER *at* R.

LEIC. (C.). How has my evil genius track'd my steps!
If she should learn
That I have held a secret correspondence
With her worst enemy! How false will then
My counsel seem, and all the fatal pains
I took to lure the Queen to Fotheringay!
The bitter turn of this sad interview,
The triumph and the tauntings of her rival;
All, all will be ascribed to my suggestions!
I see no rescue — nowhere! Ha! Who comes?

(MORTIMER **enters** *at* C., *in the most violent uneasiness, and looks with apprehension round him.*)

MORT. Lord Leicester! Is it you? Are we alone?
(*Down* L. C.)
LEIC. Ill-fated wretch, away! What seek you here?
MORT. They are upon our track — upon yours, too.
Be vigilant!
LEIC. (R. C.). Away, away!
MORT. But only hear me.
LEIC. (*violently enraged*). Down, down to hell! Why
cling you at my heels
Like an infernal spirit!
MORT. You will not hear me, then!
I came to warn you — *you*, too, are detected.
LEIC. How! What?
MORT. Lord Burleigh went to Fotheringay,
Search'd with strict scrutiny the Queen's apartments,
And found there —
LEIC. What?
MORT. A letter, which the Queen
Had just addressed to you —
LEIC. Unhappy woman!
MORT. In which she calls on you to keep your word,
Renews the promise of her hand, and mentions
The picture which she sent you.
LEIC. Death and hell!
MORT. Lord Burleigh has the letter —
LEIC. I am lost!

(*During the following speech of* MORTIMER, LEICESTER *goes up and down, as in despair.*)

MORT. Improve the moment; be beforehand with him,
And save yourself — save her! An oath can clear
Your fame; contrive excuses to avert
The worst. *I* am disarm'd, can do no more;
'Tis now your turn, my Lord — try what your weight,
What bold assurance can effect.

LEIC. (*stops suddenly, as if resolved*). I will —

(*Goes to the door*, C., *opens it, and calls.*)

Who waits without? Guards!

(OFFICER OF THE GUARD **enters** *hurriedly.*)

Seize this wretched traitor!
And guard him closely! A most dreadful plot
Is brought to light — I'll to her Majesty.

(OFFICER *calls the Guard. They* **enter** *at* C., *and stand up stage.*)

MORT. (*stands for a time petrified with wonder; collects himself soon, and follows* LEICESTER, *who passes to* R. 2 E., *with his looks expressive of the most sovereign contempt*).
Infamous wretch! But I deserve it all.
Who told me, then, to trust this practic'd villain?
Now o'er my head he strides, and on my fall
He builds the bridge of safety! Be it so.
Go, save thyself — my lips are seal'd forever;
I will not join e'en thee in my destruction —
I would not own thee, no, not e'en in death.

(*To the* OFFICER OF THE GUARD, *who steps forward to seize him.*)

What wilt thou, slave of tyranny, with me?
I laugh to scorn thy threat'nings — I am free.

(*Drawing a dagger.*)

OFFIC. He's arm'd; rush in and wrest his weapon from him. (*They rush upon him; he defends himself.*)

READY to raise back drop.

MORT. (*raising his voice*). Curse and destruction
Light on you all, who have betray'd your faith,
Your God, and your true Sov'reign! Who, alike
To earthly Mary false as to the heav'nly,
Have sold your duties to this bastard Queen!

OFFIC. Hear you these blasphemies? Rush forward — seize him!

MORT. (*stabs himself*). Beloved Queen! I could not set thee free;
Yet take a lesson from me how to die.

(*Falls into arms of guard.* LEICESTER *looks relieved. At a motion from him, Guard hustles* MORTIMER *off at* C., *and* LEICESTER **exits** R., *as scene changes.*)

RING change.

Scene II. — *Same as Act II.* ELIZABETH, *with letter in her hand, is sitting at* R. *of table placed at* L. C. BURLEIGH *stands down* L., *in front of table.*

LIGHTS as before.

ELIZ. To lure me thither! trifle with me thus!
The traitor! Thus to lead me, as in triumph,
Into the presence of his paramour!
Oh, she shall pay me for it with her life!
Is the death-warrant ready?

BUR. 'Tis prepar'd
As you commanded.

ELIZ. She shall surely die.
He shall behold her fall and fall himself!
I've driven him from my heart. No longer love,
Revenge alone is there.

BUR. But he will seek thy presence; he will clear —

ELIZ. How can he clear himself? Does not the letter
Convict him?

(*Returns letter to* BURLEIGH, *who advances for it, and, bowing, retires again to* L.)

I will never see him;
No, never, never more. Are orders giv'n
Not to admit him, should he come?

BUR. 'Tis done.

PAGE **enters** C.

PAGE. The Earl of Leicester!

BUR. (*to the* PAGE). The Queen forbids his presence.

(*The* PAGE *retires slowly.*)

ELIZ. (*controls an impulse to stop the* PAGE).
Yet, if it still were possible? If he
Could clear himself? Might it not be a snare
Laid by the cunning one to sever me
From my best friend — the ever treacherous harlot!
She might have writ the letter but to raise
Pois'nous suspicion in my heart, to ruin
The man she hates.
BUR. Yet, gracious Queen, consider —

LEICESTER *bursts open the door at* C. *with violence, and* **enters** *with an imperious air.* ELIZABETH *rises and stands, angrily grasping her chair.*

LEIC. (C.). Fain would I see the shameless man who dares
Forbid me the apartments of my Queen!
ELIZ. (*avoiding his sight*). Audacious slave!
LEIC. If for a Burleigh she be visible,
She must be so to me!
BUR. My Lord, you are
Too bold, without permission to intrude —
LEIC. My Lord, you are too arrogant, to take
The lead in these apartments. What! Permission!
I know of none who stands so high at court
As to permit my doings or refuse them.

(*Humbly approaching* ELIZABETH *and kneeling.*)

'Tis from my Sov'reign's lips alone that *I* —
ELIZ. (*without looking at him*). Out of my sight, deceitful, worthless traitor!
LEIC. 'Tis not my gracious Queen I hear, but Burleigh,
My enemy, in these ungentle words.
To my imperial mistress I appeal;
Thou hast lent him thine ear; I ask the like.
ELIZ. Speak, shameless wretch! Increase your crime — deny it.
LEIC. Nay, I will justify what I have dar'd
To do.
ELIZ. Base deceiver!
'Tis this, e'en this, which above all condemns you.
My Lord, produce the letter. (*To* BURLEIGH.)
BUR. (L. C.). Here it is.

LEIC. (*rising, takes the letter*). 'Tis Mary Stuart's hand!
(*Runs his eyes over it with perfect calmness.*)
ELIZ. Read, and be dumb!
LEIC. (*having read it; quietly*).
Appearance is against me; yet I hope
I shall not by appearances be judg'd.
ELIZ. Can you deny your secret correspondence
With Mary? That *she* sent and *you* receiv'd
Her picture, that you gave her hopes of rescue?
LEIC. I confess
That she hath said the truth.
ELIZ. Well, then, thou wretch!
BUR. His own words sentence him —
ELIZ. Out of my sight!
Away! Conduct the traitor to the tow'r!
LEIC. I am no traitor; it was wrong, I own,
To make a secret of this step to thee;
Yet pure was my intention. It was done
To search into her plots and to confound them.
ELIZ. Vain subterfuge!
BUR. And do you think, my Lord —
LEIC. I've play'd a dang'rous game, I know it well,
And none but Leicester dare be bold enough
To risk it at this court.
BUR. If the course was good,
Wherefore conceal it?
LEIC. You are us'd, my Lord,
To prate before you act.
This is your manner, my Lord Burleigh,
But mine is first to act and then to speak.
BUR. Yes; now you speak, because you must.
LEIC. (*measuring him proudly and disdainfully with his eyes*).
And *you*,
Poor, idle boaster!
In spite of all your cunning, Mary Stuart
Was free to-day, had *I* not hinder'd it.
BUR. How? You?
LEIC. Yes, *I*, my Lord; the Queen confided
In Mortimer; she open'd to the youth
Her inmost soul! Yes, she went farther still;
She gave him, too, a secret bloody charge,

Which Paulet had before refus'd with horror.
Say, is it so, or not?

(*The* QUEEN *and* BURLEIGH *look at one another with astonishment.*)

BUR. Whence know you this?

LEIC. Nay, is it not a fact? Now answer me!
And where, my Lord, where were your thousand eyes,
Not to discover Mortimer was false?
That he, the Guise's tool, and Mary's creature,
A raging Papist, daring fanatic,
Was come to free the Stuart and to murder
The Queen of England!

ELIZ. (*with the utmost astonishment*). How! This Mortimer?

LEIC. 'Twas he through whom our correspondence pass'd,
This very day she was to have been torn
From her confinement; he, this very moment,
Disclos'd his plan to me. I took him pris'ner
And gave him to the guard, when in despair
To see his work o'erturn'd, himself unmask'd,
He slew himself!

BUR. He kill'd himself, you say!
Is't so? Or did you kill him?

LEIC. Vile suspicion!
Hear but the guard who seiz'd him.
(*He goes to the door at* C. *and calls.*)
Ho! Who waits?

Enter *the* OFFICER OF THE GUARD *at* C.

Sir, tell the Queen how Mortimer expir'd.

OFFIC. (C., *up stage*). I was on duty in the palace porch,
When suddenly my Lord threw wide the door
And order'd me to take the knight in charge,
Denouncing him a traitor. Upon this
He grew enrag'd, and with most bitter curses
Against our sov'reign and our holy faith,
He drew a dagger, and before the guards
Could hinder his intention, plung'd the steel
Into his heart, and fell a lifeless corpse.

LEIC. (R. C.). 'Tis well; you may withdraw. Her Majesty
Has heard enough. (*The* OFFICER **exits.**)

ELIZ. (*sinking to her chair*). O! what a deep abyss
Of monstrous deeds!
LEIC. (C.). Who was it, then, my Queen,
Who sav'd you? Was it Burleigh?
BUR. This same Mortimer
Died most conveniently for *you*, my Lord.
ELIZ. What I should say I know not. I believe you,
And I believe you not — I think you guilty,
And yet I think you not. A curse on her
Who caus'd me all this anguish!
LEIC. She must die —
I now myself consent unto her death.
BUR. You give this counsel? *You!*
LEIC. Howe'er it wound
My feelings to be forc'd to this extreme,
Yet now I see most clearly, now I feel
That the Queen's welfare asks this bloody victim.
'Tis my proposal, therefore, that the writ
Be drawn at once, to fix the execution. (*Passes to* R.)
BUR. (*to the* QUEEN *at* L. C.) Since, then, his lordship shows such earnest zeal,
Such loyalty, 'twere well were he appointed
To see the execution of the sentence.
LEIC. Who? *I?*
BUR. Yes, *you*; you surely ne'er could find
A better means to shake off the suspicion
Which rests upon you still, than to command
Her, whom 'tis said you love, to be beheaded.
ELIZ. (*looking steadfastly at* LEICESTER). My Lord advises well. So be it, then!
LEIC. It were but fit that my exalted rank
Should free me from so mournful a commission,
Which would, indeed, in ev'ry sense, become
A Burleigh better than the Earl of Leicester.
ELIZ. Lord Burleigh shall partake this duty with you.
(*To* BURLEIGH.)
So be the warrant instantly prepar'd.

(BURLEIGH *retires backwards and* **exits** *through door at* L. **Enter** *hurriedly*, C., *the* EARL OF KENT. *As the door opens, a tumult is heard outside.*

ELIZABETH *rises, and she and* LEICESTER *both turn in surprise toward* KENT, *who remains near door.*)

How now, my Lord of Kent? What uproar's this,
I hear without?

KENT. My Queen, it is thy people.

ELIZ. What's their wish?

KENT. A panic terror has already spread
Through London that thy life has been attempted·
That murderers commission'd from the Pope
Beset thee; that the Catholics have sworn
To rescue from her prison Mary Stuart,
And to proclaim her Queen. Thy loyal people
Believe it, and are mad — her head alone
Can quiet them — this day must be her last!

ELIZ. How! Will they force me, then?

KENT. They are resolved.

Enter, L., BURLEIGH *and* DAVISON; *the latter bears the death warrant.*

ELIZ. Well, Davison?

DAV. (*approaches and kneels*, C.). Your orders are obeyed,
My Queen —

ELIZ. What orders, sir?

(*As she is about to take the papers, she shudders and starts back.*)

Oh, God!

BUR. (L. C.) Obey!
Thy people's voice; it is the voice of God!

Enter TALBOT, C.; *he surveys the scene a moment.*

ELIZ. (*irresolute, as if in conflict with herself*).
Oh, my good Lord, who will assure me now
That what I hear is my whole people's voice,
The voice of all the world!

(TALBOT, *with great emotion, comes down behind* DAVISON.)

TAL. Hold fast, my Queen, they wish to hurry thee.
Be firm. (*Looks at warrant, which* DAVISON *still holds.*)

Or is it then decided? Is it
Indeed decided? I behold a paper
Of ominous appearance in his hand;
Let it not at this moment meet thy eyes,
My Queen!

ELIZ. Good Shrewsbury! I am constrain'd —

TAL. Who can constrain thee? Thou art Queen of England!
Here must thy Majesty assert its rights.
Command those savage voices to be silent,
Who take upon themselves to put constraint
Upon thy royal will, to rule thy judgment.

ELIZ. I'm weary of my life and of my crown.
If Heav'n decree that one of us two Queens
Must perish to secure the other's life —
And sure it must be so — why should not I
Be she who yields? My people must decide;
I give them back the Sovereignty they gave.
My heart is soft and tender. I have govern'd
These many years this kingdom happily, —
But then I only needed to make happy.
Now comes my first important regal duty,
And now I feel how weak a thing I am.

BUR. (L. C.). Now, by mine honor, when I hear my Queen,
My royal liege, speak such unroyal words,
I should betray my office, should betray
My country, were I longer to be silent.
You say you love your people 'bove yourself —
Now prove it. Choose not peace for your own heart,
And leave your kingdom to the storms of discord.
Here is no time for mercy; to promote
Your people's welfare is your highest duty.

ELIZ. I would be left alone. No consolation,
No counsel can be drawn from human aid
In this conjuncture. I will lay my doubts
Before the Judge of all. I am resolved
To act as he shall teach. Withdraw, my Lords.

(*Motions to* DAVISON *to lay the paper on the table.*)

You, sir, remain in waiting — close at hand.

(*The Lords withdraw;* LEICESTER **exits** *through private door at* R.; DAVISON, KENT, BURLEIGH *and* TALBOT *back up stage and* **exeunt** C. *The latter alone stands for a few moments before the* QUEEN *and regards her significantly, then withdraws slowly and with an expression of the deepest anguish.* ELIZABETH *sits at the table gazing fixedly at the warrant.*)

O! servitude of popularity!
Disgraceful slavery! How weary am I
Of flattering this idol which my soul
Despises in its inmost depth! O! when
Shall I once more be free upon this throne?
I must respect the people's voice, and strive
To win the favor of the multitude,
And please the fancies of a mob whom nought
But jugglers' tricks delight. Oh, call not him
A king who needs must please the world; 'tis **he**
Alone who in his actions does not heed
The fickle approbation of mankind.
Have I then practis'd justice all my life,
Shunn'd each despotic deed; have I done this,
Only to bind my hands against this first,
This necessary act of violence?
Necessity, which binds e'en monarchs' wills!
Surrounded by my foes, my people's love
Alone supports me on my envied throne.
All Europe's pow'rs confed'rate to destroy me;
The Pope's inveterate decree declares me
Accurst and excommunicated. France
Betrays me with a kiss, and Spain prepares
At sea a fierce exterminating war.
Thus stand I in contention with the world,
A poor defenceless woman. I must seek
To veil the spot in my imperial birth
By which my father cast disgrace upon me.
In vain with princely virtues would I hide it;
The envious hatred of my enemies
Uncovers it, and places Mary Stuart
A threat'ning fiend before me evermore!

WARN curtain.

(*Rising and walking up and down with quick and agitated steps.*)

O no! this fear must end. Her head must fall!
I *will* have peace. She is the very fury
Of my existence.
Wherever I had planted me a comfort,
A flatt'ring hope, my way was ever cross'd
By this infernal viper!
The hated name of ev'ry ill I feel
Is Mary Stuart — were but she no more
On earth, I should be free as mountain air.

(*Standing still at* C.)

With what disdain did she look down on me,
As if her eye should blast me like the lightning!
Poor feeble wretch! I bear far other arms,
Their touch is mortal, and thou art no more.

(*Advancing to the table hastily, and taking the pen, she looks fixedly at warrant.*)

I am a bastard, am I? Hapless wretch,
I am but so the while thou liv'st and breath'st.
The moment I destroy thee is the doubt
Destroy'd which hangs o'er my imperial right.

RING curtain.

As soon as England has no other choice,
My mother's honor and my birthright triumphs!

(*She signs with resolution; then lets her pen fall, and steps back with an expression of terror. After a pause she rings.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

Scene. — *The same as in Act I.* HANNAH KENNEDY, *in deep mourning, her eyes still red from weeping, is seated at* R. *of table at* L., *employed in sealing letters and parcels. Her sorrow often interrupts her occupation, and she is seen at such intervals to pray in silence.* PAULET *and* DRURY *also*

in mourning in the room. PAULET *delivers to the* NURSE *a box of jewels and a paper, and seems to inform her by signs that it contains the inventory of the effects the* QUEEN *had brought with her. At the sight of these riches the anguish of the* NURSE *is renewed; she sinks into a deep, gloomy melancholy, during which* DRURY, PAULET, *and the Servants silently* **exeunt** R.

LIGHTS half down.

READY jewels and paper for Paulet at opening. Cup of wine at R. for Curl.

MELVIL **enters** *at* R.

KEN. (*screams aloud, as soon as she observes him, and rising, hurries to meet him at* C.). Melvil! Is't you? Behold I you again?

MEL. (R. C.). Yes, faithful Kennedy, we meet once more.

KEN. (L. C.). After this long, long, painful separation!

MEL. A most unhappy, bitter meeting, this!

KEN. You come —

MEL. To take an everlasting leave
Of my dear Queen — to bid a last farewell!

KEN. O, Melvil, Melvil, why was it our fate
To see the dawn of this unhappy day!

MEL. Let us not melt each other with our grief.
Throughout my whole remaining life, as long
As ever it may be, I'll sit and weep;
A smile shall never more light up these cheeks.
Ne'er will I lay this sable garb aside,
But lead henceforth a life of endless mourning.
Yet on this last sad day I will be firm.
Pledge me your word to moderate your grief;
And when the rest, of comfort all bereft,
Abandon'd to despair, wail round her, we
Will lead her with heroic resolution,
And be her staff upon the road to death!

KEN. (L. C.). Melvil! You are deceiv'd if you suppose
The Queen has need of our support to meet

Her death with firmness. *She* it is, my friend,
Who will exhibit the undaunted heart.
Oh! trust me, Mary Stuart will expire
As best becomes a heroine and Queen!

MEL. (R. C.). Receiv'd she firmly, then, the sad decree
Of death? 'Tis said that she was not prepar'd.

KEN. She was not.

(*She turns aside, overpowered by excessive anguish.*)

MEL. O, God in Heav'n! Tell me, then, how bore
The Queen this terrible vicissitude?

KEN. (*after a pause, in which she has somewhat collected herself*).
Not by degrees can we relinquish life;
Quick, sudden, in the twinkling of an eye
The separation must be made, the change
From temporal to eternal life; and God
Imparted to our mistress at this moment
His grace, to cast away each earthly hope,
And firm and full of faith to mount the skies.
No sign of pallid fear dishonor'd her.

MEL. Where is she now? Can you not lead me to her?

KEN. She spent the last remainder of the night
In pray'r, and from her dearest friends she took
Her last farewell in writing; then she wrote
Her will with her own hand. She now enjoys
A moment of repose.

MEL. Who attends her?

KEN. None but her women and physician, Burgoyne.

Enter MARGARET CURL *from* L., *weeping.*

KEN. How, Madam, fares the Queen? Is she awake?

CURL (*drying her tears*).
She is already dressed — she asks for you.

KEN. I go.

(*To* MELVIL, *who seems to wish to accompany her.*)
But follow not, until the Queen
Has been prepar'd to see you. (**Exit** L.)

CURL. (L. C.). Melvil, sure,
The ancient steward?

MEL. Yes, the same.

CURL. O, Sir,
This is a house which needs no steward now!
Melvil, you come from London; can you give
No tidings of my husband?
MEL. It is said
He will be set at liberty, as soon —
CURL. As soon as our dear Queen shall be no more.
O, the unworthy, the disgraceful traitor!
He is our Lady's murderer — 'tis said
It was his testimony which condemn'd her.
MEL. 'Tis true.
CURL. O, curse upon him! Be his soul
Condemn'd forever! He has borne false witness —
MEL. Think, Madam, what you say.
CURL. I will maintain it
With ev'ry sacred oath, before the court,
I will repeat it in his very face;
The world shall hear of nothing else. I say
That she dies innocent!
MEL. God grant it true!

Enter HANNAH KENNEDY *at* L.

KEN. (*to* CURL).
Go, Madam, and require a cup of wine —
'Tis for our lady.

(CURL **exits** R.)

MEL. Is the Queen, then, sick?
KEN. She thinks that she is strong; she is deceiv'd
By her heroic courage; she believes
She has no need of nourishment; yet still
A hard and painful task's allotted her.
Her enemies shall not enjoy the triumph;
They shall not say that fear hath blanch'd her cheeks,
When her fatigues have conquer'd human weakness.
MEL. May I approach her?
KEN. She will come herself.

Enter BURGOYNE *at* L., *two women of the chamber follow him, weeping, and in deep mourning.*

BURG. (*at* L., *meeting* MELVIL). O, Melvil!
(*They clasp hands at* C., *overcome with grief.*)

MEL. O, Burgoyne!

(*They embrace silently.*)

Enter MARGARET CURL, R., *bearing a golden cup of wine; she places it hastily upon the table, and leans, pale and trembling, against a chair.*

KEN. (*going toward her*). O, God!
BURG. (L. C.). Speak, Madam.
CURL (R.). What, alas! have I beheld!
As I went down the staircase which conducts
To the great hall below, a door stood open;
I look'd into the chamber, and I saw —
O, Heav'n!
MEL. (C.). What saw you?
CURL. All the walls were hung
With black; a spacious scaffold, too, o'erspread
With sable cloth, was rais'd above the floor,
And in the middle of the scaffold stood
A dreadful sable block! Upon it lay
A naked, polish'd axe; the hall was full
Of cruel people, crowding round the scaffold;
Who, with a horrid thirst for human blood,
Seem'd waiting for the victim!
MEL. Be calm; the Queen approaches.

Enter *at* L. MARY, *in white and sumptuously arrayed, as for a festival. She wears hanging from her neck, on a row of small beads, an Agnus Dei; a rosary hangs from her girdle; she bears a crucifix in her hand, and a diadem of precious stones binds her hair; her large black veil is thrown back. Behind her are four maids of honor all in black. On her entrance, all present fall back on both sides with the most violent expressions of anguish.* MELVIL *falls involuntarily upon his knees.*

MARY (*slowly reaching* C., *pauses, and with quiet majesty, looks round the whole circle*). Why weep ye? Ye should rather
Rejoice with me that now at length the end
Of my long woe approaches; that my shackles
Fall off, my prison opens, and my soul

Delighted mounts on seraph's wings, and seeks
The land of everlasting liberty.

(*Sees* MELVIL.)

How! Melvil here! (*Gives him her hand, which he kisses.*)
My worthy Sir, not so.

(*Raises him.*)

Arise; you rather come in time to see
The triumph of your mistress than her death.
One comfort, which I never had expected,
Is granted me, that, after death, my name
Will not be quite abandon'd to my foes;
One friend at least, one partner of my faith,
Will be my witness in the hour of death.
Say, honest Melvil, how you far'd the while
Is this inhospitable, hostile land?
For since the time they tore you from my side,
My fears for you have oft depress'd my soul.

MEL. No other evil gall'd me, but my grief
For thee, and that I wanted pow'r to serve thee.

MARY. O! Could I but have felt before my death
The happiness of pressing one descendant
Of the dear blood of Stuart to my bosom.
But I must suffer in a foreign land,
None but my servants to bewail my fate!
Melvil, — to your loyal bosom I commit
My latest wishes. Bear then, Sir, my blessing
To the most Christian king, my royal brother,
And the whole royal family of France.
I bless the cardinal, my honor'd uncle,
And also Henry Guise, my noble cousin.
They are remember'd in my will. I hope
That they will not despise, how poor soe'er
They be, the presents of a heart which loves them.

(*Turning to her servants.*)

You, I have bequeath'd unto my royal brother

(*They all approach and kneel before her.* MELVIL *returns to* R., *near* KENNEDY, *as* MARGARET CURL *passes to* C., *and kneels with the rest.*)

Of France; he will protect you, he will give you
Another country and a better home;
And if my last desires have any weight,

Stay not in England; let no haughty Briton
Glut his proud heart with your calamities,
Nor see those in the dust who once were mine.
Swear by this image of our suff'ring Lord
To leave this fatal land when I'm no more.

MEL. (*touching the crucifix*). I swear obedience, in the name of all.

MARY. What I, though poor and plunder'd, still possess,
Of which I am allow'd to make disposal,
Shall be amongst you shar'd; for I have hope
In this at least, my will may be fulfill'd.
And what I wear upon the way to death
Is yours — nor envy me, on this occasion,
The pomp of earth upon the road to heav'n.
(*To the ladies of her chamber.*)
To you, my Alice, Gertrude, Rosamund,
(*Gives her hand to each in turn, who kisses it, sobbing.*)
I leave my pearls, my garments. You are young,
And ornament may still delight your hearts.
(*All but* MARGARET CURL *rise, still sobbing, and retire to* L., *where they stand weeping.*)
You, Margaret, possess the nearest claims;
To you I should be gen'rous, for I leave you
The most unhappy woman of them all.
(MARGARET *bends low and kisses the hem of her gown.*)
That I have not aveng'd your husband's fault
On you, I hope my legacy will prove.
(*Bends and kisses* MARGARET *on the brow.* MARGARET *rises and retires to* L.)
The worth of gold, my Hannah, charms not thee,
(*Embraces* KENNEDY, *who approaches from* R. C.)
Nor the magnificence of precious stones.
My memory, I know, will be to thee
The dearest jewel. Take this handkerchief;
I work'd it for thee in the hours of sorrow
With my own hands, and my hot scalding tears
Are woven in the texture. You will bind
My eyes with this, when it is time. This last
Sad service I would wish but from my Hannah.

KEN. (*turning aside to lean on* MELVIL). O, Melvil! I cannot support it.

MARY. Come,
Come all, and now receive my last farewell.

(*She stretches forth her hands; the* WOMEN, *violently weeping, fall successively at her feet, and kiss her outstretched hand.*)

Marg'ret, farewell — my Alice, fare thee well;
Thanks, Burgoyne, for thy honest, faithful service.
Thy lips are hot, my Gertrude. I have been
Much hated, yet have been as much belov'd.
No more; farewell,
Farewell, farewell, my friends, farewell for ever.

(*She turns suddenly from them; all but* MELVIL *and* KENNEDY *retire to* L. *and* **exeunt.**)

MARY (*after the others are all gone, to* MELVIL). I have arrang'd all temporal concerns,
And hope to leave the world in debt to none.
MEL. One painful conflict is in store for thee.
Feel'st thou within thee strength enough to smother
Each impulse of malignity and hate?
MARY. I fear not a relapse. I have to God
Devoted both my hatred and my love.
MEL. Well, then, prepare thee to receive my Lords
Of Leicester and of Burleigh. They are here.
(*Passes to* L. C.)

Enter BURLEIGH, LEICESTER, *and* PAULET *at* R. LEICESTER *remains in the background, without raising his eyes;* BURLEIGH, *who remarks his confusion, steps between him and the* QUEEN.

BUR. (R. C., *down stage*). I come, my Lady Stuart, to receive
Your last commands and wishes.
MARY (C.). Thanks, my Lord.
BUR. It is the pleasure of my royal mistress
That nothing reasonable be denied you.
MARY. My will, my Lord, declares my last desires;
I've plac'd it in the hand of Sir Amias,
And humbly beg that it may be fulfill'd.
PAUL. (R. C., *up stage*). You may rely on this.

MARY. I beg that all
My servants unmolested may return
To France or Scotland, as their wishes lead.
BUR. It shall be as you wish.
What wishes else?
MARY. Unto her Majesty
Of England bear a sister's salutation;
Tell her that from the bottom of my heart
I pardon her my death.
(*To* PAULET.) Good Sir,
I have unwittingly caused you much sorrow —
Bereft you of your age's only stay.
O, let me hope you do not hate my name.
PAUL. (*coming down* R., *giving her his hand*). The Lord be with you! go your way in peace. (*Retires up stage.*)

(*Door up stage at* R. *opens slowly and noiselessly, and through it men under arms are seen.* HANNAH KENNEDY *and the women shudder and a loud sob is heard. The men bend their heads.* MARY STUART *turns slowly and sees the soldiers just as the* SHERIFF **enters** *with his white staff in hand. She shudders convulsively once, but immediately regains her composure.* HANNAH KENNEDY *approaches her fearfully at* L.)

MARY. What ails thee, Hannah? Yes, my hour has come,
And part we must — farewell —
(*To* MELVIL, *who approaches at her* R.).
You, worthy sir,
And my dear faithful Hannah, shall attend me,
In my last moments. I now
Have nothing in this world to wish for more.

(MELVIL *holds up the crucifix, and she receives it and kisses it.*)

My God! My Comforter! My blest Redeemer!
As once thy arms were stretch'd upon the cross,
Let them be now extended to receive me!

(*She turns round to go; at the same moment her eyes fall upon* LEICESTER, *who stands near lower* R. *entrance, and on her going, starts involuntarily and turns his eyes towards her. At this sight* MARY *trembles, her knees fail her, she is about to fall, when* LEICESTER *springs forward, catches at her, and supports her. She regards him for some time earnestly and in silence; he cannot support her looks. At length she speaks, and as she speaks* LEICESTER *falls to his knees.*)

WARN curtain.

You keep your word, my Lord of Leicester, for
You promised me your arm to lead me forth
From prison, and you lend it to me now.
The Earl of Leicester,
The long expected, the long wish'd for friend,
Appears at length in Fotheringay, and I leave
These dismal walls behind me, and forever.
All is fulfill'd, and you have sav'd your honor.
Farewell, my lord, and, if you can, be happy!
To woo two Queens has been your daring aim;
You have disdain'd a tender, loving heart—
Betray'd it, in the hope to win a proud one.

RING curtain.

Kneel at the feet of Queen Elizabeth!
May your reward not prove your punishment.
Farewell; I now have nothing more on earth.

(*She goes, preceded by the* SHERIFF, R. 2. E.; *at her side* MELVIL *and* KENNEDY, BURLEIGH *and* PAULET *follow; the others wailing, follow her with their eyes till she disappears.*)

SLOW CURTAIN.

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